

8 FREE PLAYABLE DEMOS ONLY WITH THIS MAGAZINE!



PlayStation®2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

BURNOUT 3

LOOK OUT! Behind the wheel of the world's fastest racer

8
PLAYABLE
DEMOS!
THE BEST DEMOS
GUARANTEED!

22 MASSIVE NEW REVIEWS

Champions of Norrath › MTX: Mototrax
This Is Soccer 2004 › Baldur's Gate II
SpyHunter 2 › Underworld › Alias + more

STOP PRESS!

First GoldenEye 2
news revealed

IT'S HARRY

To the end of the world
and back with Pitfall Harry.
Official verdict!

STARCRAFT: GHOST

Sexier than Lara!
Better than Metal Gear!
Exclusive report inside

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Jet Li stars in Rise to
Honour, PS2's new fighting
monster. *Review inside!*

FULL GUIDES AND NEW CHEATS FOR:

- Manhunt
- Lord of the Rings: ROTK
- FIFA Soccer 2004
- Jak II: Renegade

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ISSUE 26 APRIL 2004

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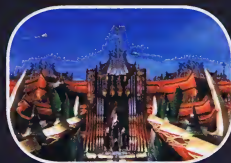
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DERVINT HOWARD

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SPYHUNTER 2



PlayStation 2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

PlayStation 2

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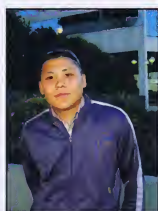
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"It doesn't take too long for word to get around that a hot game is being played, and our studio becomes standing room only"

EDITOR'S LETTER

The OPS2 Team gets sent every PS2 game under the sun long before it's released – and we know how lucky we are. As you can imagine, we've played more dogs than anybody else but we've also had the privilege to uncover, for the very first time, the true classics in these very pages.

No matter how many years our team has behind us in the games industry, it's still the most telling factor that we have a special game in our midsts when it manages to pull a crowd at OPS2 Towers. When a new game arrives and everyone involved with the magazine (and that includes marketing gurus, administration staff and even suit-wearing number-crunchers) crams into our testing studio, we know immediately that there's just that "little bit more" going on.

In the past, this has been reserved only for games like MGS, the PES games and Vice City. It doesn't take long for word to get around that a hot game is being played, and our studio becomes standing room only.

This month, we landed *Burnout 3* and it has been the first game in quite a while to enjoy so much universal respect. What's more, we got the game way before anyone else. Not only is it a special game for its blistering speed, unbelievable graphics, online madness and amazing crash sequences, but it's also significant for us because it means that we know we deliver our readers the best magazine, with the most accurate information first.

Racing titles are a dime-a-dozen and it's rare for any new game to really pull something from left-field to make you stand up and take note. Recently, *Need For Speed: Underground* managed it, but *Burnout 3* is set to take that even further.

As the game is still incomplete, it's still a little too early to categorically declare that *Burnout 3* is destined for such lofty "classic" status. Certainly though, the game is headed down the right path. Very quickly!

Richie Young

RICHELIE YOUNG
Editor



FIGHTING FOR THE WHEEL ARE



NARAYAN PATTISON
Deadline is tough on any magazine, but this month Naz realised he bit off more than he could chew! The *Starcraft*: Ghost and *Burnout 3* stories are just a fraction of his writing!



TRISTAN OGILVIE
Planning a wedding is hard work – and Tristan will testify to that! He's been sick, turns up to work then goes home to discuss invitations, romance and flowers.



MICHAEL DEVRIES
The new-look OPS2 is largely the result of our resident artists here at the Towers. We reckon it suits Michael's style – slick and sharp! Drop us a line to tell us what you think!



LUKE REILLY
OPS2's tallest writer has told us recently that he's willing to go overseas on our behalf to visit games shows – should the opportunity arise. Oh! What a noble sacrifice!



MICHELLE STARR
Well, it seems that we're not the only ones who like Michelle! Judging by your letters, she's already got plenty of fans. You'll all be happy to know that Ms Starr will be writing even more for us!



ED LOMAS
And he thought he was in Australia for a holiday! Englishman Ed has had his work cut out for him of late. There are no pints, the work is even harder and we beat him at games every day...

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**"BEST. SIMPSONS.
TIE-IN. EVER!"**
Official PlayStation®2 Magazine

The image shows the front cover of the PlayStation 2 game 'The Hobbit: The Prelude to the Lord of the Rings'. At the top, the 'PlayStation 2' logo is visible. Below it, the text 'MIRAGE ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS' is written in a small, stylized font. The title 'THE HOBBIT' is prominently displayed in large, yellow, serif capital letters. Below the title, the subtitle 'THE PRELUDE TO THE LORD OF THE RINGS' is written in a smaller, white, serif font. The central artwork features a young Bilbo Baggins with a determined expression, wearing a blue tunic and a green scarf, holding a sword. He is surrounded by other characters from the story, including Gandalf the White, who is partially visible in the background. The background is a dark, atmospheric landscape with a large, glowing yellow light source, possibly the sun or moon. At the bottom of the cover, there are several logos: 'MIRAGE' on the left, 'A THAMES & COSBY PRODUCTION' in the center, and '60+' on the right. The overall design is vibrant and captures the essence of the Hobbit story.

"RANKS AMONG THE **BEST**
ADVENTURE GAMES EVER..."
- Play Magazine

**VIVENDI
UNIVERSAL**
games



on the dvd

PLAYABLE DEMOS



Welcome to Issue 26 of Official PlayStation 2 Magazine-Australia. Unfortunately, we don't have a demo DVD for you this month... Ha ha! April fool of course we did it was on the front of the magazine, you idiot!

Thing is, it's only a blank disc - there's isn't any actual content on it... Ha ha! April fool again! Of course there is! There's loads on there! We've got eight playable demos of the hottest new and upcoming releases, including a huge new James Bond 007: Everything Or Nothing demo, a chance to sneak through Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3, and a multiplayer demo of Crash Nitro Kart. On top of the playable stuff there's the usual load of rolling videos and exclusive downloadable content, plus - for the first time ever - if you eat the DVD you'll be able to fly...! Ha ha! April fool!

Ed Lomas

ED LOMAS
Associate Editor

PS To use this DVD, load it up on your PS2. Then scroll between games and rolling demos with the **↓** and **↑** keys. To choose within a section use **←** and **→**. Press **ⓧ** to start up your choice. Please note, you may have to reset your PS2 after some demos.

YOUR DISC

Every issue, Official PlayStation 2 Magazine brings you something no other magazine can - playable demos. Offering exclusive levels, tracks and missions, our playable DVD enables you try the very latest PS2 games before you buy, often weeks, even months before release. Why risk your hard-earned cash on a \$100 game when you can try it out on our cover-mounted DVD? From GT3 and MGS2 to TimeSplitters 2 and Final Fantasy X, we've always featured playable demos of the games that matter. Throw in top quality video footage of the hits of the future and our DVD is the best bargain on the newsagent's shelves.

DISC PROBLEMS?

If your disc isn't working properly, simply send it back to this address for a replacement.

Demo Disc Returns
Official PlayStation 2 Magazine
P.O. Box 1037 Bondi Junction
NSW 1585

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3



DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT
GAME TYPE: TACTICAL SHOOTER
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1 [FULL GAME 1-8 ONLINE]

Ubisoft's impressive tactical shooter based on the Splinter Cell graphics engine gives you command of an elite counter-terrorism squad. But there's not quite as much of the slow-moving 'tactical' stuff to worry about as in previous Rainbow Six games. This new gem concentrates more on the 'shooter' than before, as you take control of your men from a first-person view and offload a massive variety of weaponry into them godsdamned pesky rebels. We've had this game running non-stop at OPS2 Towers and we've been more than impressed in most departments. Check out our exclusive playable demo to see what we mean.



WHIPLASH



DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
GAME TYPE: PLATFORM
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1

One of the wackiest ideas for a platform game in recent times sees you controlling a pair of rodents escaping from a research laboratory while still chained together. Our demo lets you take Sparx and Redmond through one entire level of the game.



URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER



DISTRIBUTOR: ACCLAIM
GAME TYPE: SPORTS
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1-2

Soccer the way most of us play it - in tracky dacks in the street, not in \$1,000 customised boots on manicured grass in front of 80,000 fans. Our demo gives you two teams and half a match.



KILLSWITCH



DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
GAME TYPE: ACTION
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1

We've got a whole level of this stealthy shooter from top developer Namco for you to try and get through - the tough bit is that there's a six minute time limit, so you haven't got time to hang around hiding in cardboard boxes and lockers like Solid Snake.



NIGHTSHADE



DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
GAME TYPE: ACTION
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1

The side-story follow-up to Sega's Shinobi sees the sexy ninja Hibana jumping, flipping, dashing, kicking and slicing her way through enemy ninjas and freaky monsters galore. Boot up our exclusive playable demo and you can take her jumping, flipping, dashing, kicking and slicing through a whole level of all-out action.



REVIEW ON P51

OTHER MAGAZINES LET YOU WATCH OPS2 LETS YOU PLAY



JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

We gave you a preview demo of Bond's latest and greatest mission a few issues ago, but to celebrate *Everything Or Nothing's* release we've got an all-new demo to check out. This one includes two single-player missions – one on foot and one on a superbike – as well as a two-player co-op level for you and another 007 wannabe!

DISTRIBUTOR: EA
GAME TYPE: ACTION
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1-2



CRASH NITRO KART

It's important for all wacky platform game characters to be able to drive, and even though he's cross-eyed most of the time, Crash Bandicoot recently earned his 'P' plates. He's celebrating this achievement with an intergalactic kart race against a bunch of his best friends and worst enemies, and our playable demo gives you the chance to join him. You can pick from the eight main characters in the game and race on a choice of two tracks.

DISTRIBUTOR: VIVENDI
GAME TYPE: RACING
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1-4



DOWNHILL DOMINATION

Sure, engines can be fun, but the thrill of hurtling down a mountain at speed with nothing but a bunch of pipes and some rubber tyres between your legs is hard to beat. Our demo of Codemasters' pedal-powered racer lets you choose from 120 characters and three different bikes, then either try out the training mode or take to Mt Midouline in Italy in a number of different race modes.

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
GAME TYPE: RACING
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1-2
(FULL GAME 1-4)



REEL FOOTAGE

Not only do we have the **ONLY** playable PS2 demos – we've got all the best rolling ones too!



DRIV3R

View the official trailer for this upcoming chase-filled crime caper and see exactly why we decided it was hot enough to earn the front cover of OPS2#23.



.HACK – VOLUME 1: INFECTION

See this anime action-RPG in, erm... action. Then check out the official verdict on p62!



FORBIDDEN SIREN

Sony's undercracker-sollingly creepy horror title is staggering closer to release, leaving a trail of lumpy blood behind it. Check out some more footage of the game in action... if you dare! Nyaa-ha-ha-haaaaaargh!



THE HOBBIT

Before there was *The Lord of the Rings*, there was *The Hobbit*, and it was a whole lot more fun than all that stupid 'Thrangrfin, son of Glendor' stuff. All of Bilbo Baggins' adventures are now playable in this cheery platformer.

DOWNLOADER

Cheating's okay sometimes. Like those times when you're showering and the loo's just a bit too far away...

NEW TIMESPLITTERS 2 LEVEL – EXCLUSIVE!

Another brand-new, entirely exclusive *TimeSplitters 2* level made by the game's developers, Free Radical Design, especially for OPS2 readers. And guess what, this time it's based on OPS2 Towers! Check out our offices as you blow the crap out of your mates!

LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING

Is all that travelling, battling and eating nothing but lembas bread driving you mad? Want to be able to access everything in Middle Earth with the minimum of hassle? Simply help yourself to our magical save, which will unlock the entire game for you.

MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

Our two-part walkthrough (which concluded last issue) still not enough to get you through the war-torn *Rising Sun*? You need to load up!

CHAOS LEGION

Yet another life-saving save for you, this time for Capcom's latest hack 'n' slasher. Download the file and you'll have everything in the game unlocked for your pleasure!

SSX 3

Not extreme enough at SSX 3? Yeah, we thought as much. Depressing being that pathetic, isn't it? Hey, tell you what – have our save game! 'Cos we're gnarly. Man.

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

Daxter's Restraining Order against Jak finally came through!



BAD BOYS 3

Jak III and Ratchet 3 confirmed!



Not even 12 months on from the release of their respective predecessors and new sequels have already been announced for the Jak & Daxter and Ratchet & Clank games.

Jak III and Ratchet & Clank 3 are both well into development, as you can see from the accompanying screens, and will be spinning toward your PS2 console before the end of the year – both titles are tentatively slated for a Spring release.

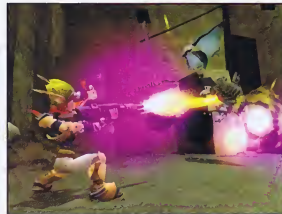
No actual gameplay details have been announced on either game thus far, but that hasn't stopped us from using our magnifying glasses to scour these screens to come up with what we like to refer to as "completely unsubstantiated guesstimates".

In one of the screens you can see that Jak has flesh-coloured pads covering his arms and legs. Either Jak

has been bumping uglies with some very seedy types and caught one of the nastiest infections we've ever seen or he's sporting the latest in high-tech bio armour. Our money's on the armour. In another screen you can just make out a pair of handcuffs that have been slapped on Jak's mitts. We reckon that either the authorities have caught up with him for the aforementioned sex crimes or some of the corrupt Generals didn't take kindly to Jak knocking off their Baron in the last game.

Ratchet looks like he may have gotten a little lost on the way home. From what we can make out in the screens Ratchet has crash-landed on the forest moon Endor (check out the Ewok villages above him).

We're not quite sure how Sony convinced George "I've gone senile" Lucas to sign the rights over but we



hope Wicket turns Clank into a garbage bin and signs on as Ratchet's new sidekick. Ratchet also seems to have picked up some more powerful guns, but we always knew that that was going to happen. Be sure to check back with OPS2 next month when we'll hopefully have some slightly firmer facts on these superb-looking sequels! **TO & NP**

STOP THE PRESS

A GRAND ANNOUNCEMENT

It's official, and it's coming out this year!

After months of phone calls and speculation, the name of Rockstar's next jewel in the GTA crown is exactly what many of us had expected: *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*.

Developed by Rockstar North, the game will be exclusively available on the PS2 and should hit the US on October 19 and Europe on October 22. No word on whether Aussies will have to endure the extra wait that was the case with *Vice City*.

According to President of Rockstar Sam Houser, even though the finished game is months away, expectations are high and the Rockstar North team is doing everything it can to exceed its

predecessors in every way. "We are starting to become very proud of what we have achieved and can't wait to get the game into players' hands," he said. Rockstar North President Leslie Benzies hopes *GTA: San Andreas* will redefine the series and "revolutionise open-ended gameplay and game production values".

To date the *GTA* games have shipped over 30 million units. Details are still thin on the ground, but if you're not excited about this one you don't deserve a PS2. We hope the OFLC feels the same way... **► LR**



MOVIE MURMURS

The latest news and rumours in the world of film and DVD

● RUMOURS CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE ABOUT the possibility of a movie based on interactive's *Hitman* franchise. Word is Christian Bale is in negotiations to star as 47, and Eidos is looking for a studio to butter up for the green light. On a related note, it's been confirmed that Christian Bale is set to play the young Bruce Wayne in *Batman: Intimidation*, with Michael Caine donning his best butler shoes to take on the role of Alfred.

SMASH HIT

LLEYTON LLANDS ON PS2 AT LLAST

Aussie tennis top gun signs up for Smash Court 2

You either love him or hate him, but there's no doubt that Lleyton Hewitt has been Australia's best tennis player over the past few years. Not quite at the same level of total domination is *Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament*, which many see as the number two seed in the PS2 tennis library behind the beloved *Virtua Tennis 2*.

So perhaps in order to take *Smash Court 2* to the top of the rankings, Namco has enlisted Mr. Kim Clijsters to add a winning edge to the forthcoming sequel. But the toilet paper-pimping bad boy isn't the only addition to this year's roster. Other new faces include the powerful Serena Williams and the relatively nondescript Juan Carlos Ferrero.

Smash Court 2 will feature all four officially licensed Grand Slams including the biggest of them all, Wimbledon. *Smash Court 2* is released in May, and we'll be swinging with the best of them then! **► TO**



● SPECULATION ABOUNDS FOR A THIRD INSTALLMENT of the box office behemoth *X-Men* franchise. Some of the cast have expressed interest in returning but their final decision may rest upon whether Hugh Jackman is willing to strap on the claws again.

● BRUCE WILLIS AND JOHN MC TIERNAN are re-teaming for the unfortunately (and hopefully tentatively) titled *Die Hard 4: Die Hardest*. McTiernan directed the first and third *Die Hard* films so don't pretend you aren't at least slightly interested. Audiences should be asking themselves "how can the same thing happen to the same guy four times?" in 2005.

● THE PAST FEW YEARS have been a wet dream for comic book fans, and it doesn't look like the ride is quite over. *Hellboy* is hitting screens soon, and *Blade: Trinity* and *Spiderman II* are due out later this year. But that's not all; more comic book flicks like *The Fantastic Four*, *Elektra*, *The Punisher* and *Ghost Rider* are sitting on the horizon. We hope *Astro Boy* is next!



loading...

STARR REPORT

Game Nouveau

There have been a lot of changes flying around gaming lately, and a lot of games have been approached in new ways. This is making for one very happy girl!

I love it when developers experiment and try to improve on the way things are "done." I love it when I get a new game, and it's trying something different to anything I've played before. Not all attempts are successful, but hell – at least they're giving it a shot!

Take, for example, *Megaman X7*. It was kind of annoying to play. But it also took the *Megaman* series in a direction it had never been before, and offered something new to its fans. Capcom gets points for trying, even if the game itself turned out not quite as well as hoped. In this situation, it's easier to see why fans would be a little irritated.

But guys, seriously – *FFX-2* is a damn fine game. And believe me when I say it's a lot less girly than you think. Or maybe the other *Final Fantasy* games are a lot more girly than you want to believe. I think the main difference is that the guys who look like girls have been replaced by actual girls. It doesn't detract from the gameplay one bit.

Of course, *FFX-2* seems to be an exception to a general rule – that we're usually more than willing to take part in experiments.

Project Zero was largely ignored when it came out. So was *Jak & Daxter*. Ico hardly got a look-in. But *Jak II: Renegade* emptied out of the shelves before you could say Dark Eco, and the progress of the upcoming sequels to *Project Zero* and *Ico* are being very closely watched by gamers everywhere (or should be, at least). These games all gave us something very new in their respective genres – and, having had a taste, we want more.

And boy, are we getting it. With games like *Beyond Good & Evil*, *hack and Forbiddn Siren* coming out, it seems that developers are becoming more and more willing to take a risk and create something new. And the best part is, it can only get better from here!

MICHELLE STARR
Games Writer

GAME ON

PS2 TO CARRY THE TORCH

Sony nabs exclusive rights to *The Games*.

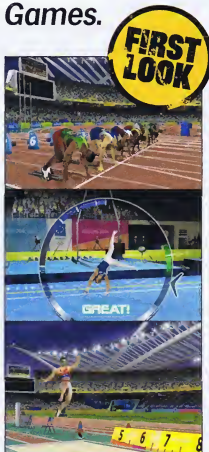
Anybody remember Summer Games on the Commodore 64? So much button-mashing; so much joystick-waggling. And so much fun too, at least until your entire forearm seized up and you had to write left-handed for the next week at school. Ahh, the memories.

Now a couple of decades on it's time to relive those glory days, as Sony has signed the exclusive rights to the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. The game is set for release in July, just one month prior to the opening ceremony in August.

Athens 2004 will feature a heap of the real life Olympic venues, including the Olympic

Stadium for Athletics, the Olympic Aquatic Centre and the historic Panathinaiko Stadium for Archery – all recreated in the game with the aid of the original architectural plans and onsite photos.

Almost all of the events from both Track & Field and Aquatics will be recreated, along with numerous additional events such as Equestrian, Gymnastics and Weightlifting. What's more, you'll be able to take on up to three of your mates to find out who really is the best armchair athlete. After all that we managed to get through that story without making one "Clean & Jerk" joke. Oh, damn. **▶ TO**



SHOCKER!

SHELLSHOCK! IT'S A WARZONE!

Killzone creators unleash the hell of war



While EA's *Medal of Honor* war series is authentic in terms of locations, visuals and sound, it has never been one to really present gamers with the true horrors of the battlefield, rarely showing any vicious injuries or truly gruesome acts.

Enter *ShellShock* Nam '67, a new FPS being developed by Guerilla and using the same engine as the hotly-anticipated *Killzone*. *ShellShock* depicts the horrors of the controversial Vietnam War for the first time in

a game, complete with napalm bombardments of civilian villages and horrific booby traps.

Thanks to the stunningly realistic 3D engine, *ShellShock* presents a graphically harrowing depiction of the terrors of combat. Missions range from battlefield encounters with the North Vietnamese Army to stealth-based missions. *ShellShock* also sees you progress in your military career.

It's not light subject matter – so let's hope it's handled with appropriate sensitivity! **▶ TO**



THE TOP TEN

GAME CHARACTERS YOU WANT TO KEEP HAPPY

1. CASH (MANHUNT)

Death row status notwithstanding this is someone to whom execution of others with glass, plastic bags, bats, tools and various firearms is second nature. Don't annoy this dude. Better yet, avoid him altogether.

2. 47 (HITMAN 2)

Get in 47's bad books, and not only will he dispatch you, he'll do it in a really, really creative way.

3. TOMMY VERCETTI (GTA-VC)

Never diss a guy that owns half of Miami and has a 500 round chain-gun in his garage. Enough said.

4. MARK HAMMOND (THE GETAWAY)

This crazy geezer shot up half of London to get his boy back. Just don't mention his wife...

5. JAK (JAK II: RENEGADE)

He may look cute but he'll pound seven shades of brown out of you should you cross him.

6. TOMMY ANGELO (MAFIA)

We're talking about a guy that helps kill a man, then shows up at this man's funeral and proceeds to kill most of the people there too. No, we're serious...

7. AYAME (TENCHU 3: WRATH OF HEAVEN)

Forgot her birthday? She'll be around to slice you up quicker than a frog in a blender. In fact, she's probably behind you right now...

8. NICK KANG (TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA)

The last guy who mouthed off to an LA cop was Rodney King, so watch your step around Kang, or you might end up with a snap kick upside the head.

9. BRUCE BANNER (THE HULK)

Don't get him angry. You wouldn't like him when he's angry...

10. SAM FISHER (SPUNKY CELL)

This is a tough one to include, because Sam's admittedly a brave, patriotic soldier and a devoted father to boot. Just don't piss him off, because you won't see him come back to get revenge.



SCREENSHOT OF THE MONTH

Driv3r is exploding with detail – literally

Every vehicle has been pieced together with real working components in stunning detail.

Check it out! That used to be the top of a police car before Tanner blew it to pieces!

You can shoot every panel on the car, leaving realistic bullet holes!

Shadows are cast accurately and EVERYTHING in the game will cast a shadow.



LEAGUE TO GO HANDHELD
After achieving massive sales with *Rugby League*, Kiwi-based and tricky to pronounce developer Sidhe Interactive has announced that it has begun work developing titles for the PSP. While they didn't confirm *Rugby League* as one of these titles, we would be surprised if they didn't tweak the engine a bit and port it to the portable that we're all so desperately hanging for.



THE SIXTH SMACKDOWN!
Japanese developer Yukes! Entertainment has declared that it's working on *WWE Smackdown! 6*. They've confirmed the fact that it will be playable online and released in November 2004. Meanwhile, we've got our own wrestling-based statement to declare: The Rock can't act. There, we said it. Hey what do you know? We do feel better now...

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feature

DVD
VIDEO



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S.W.A.T.

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THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY

If you're a big fan of ancient Greek mythology then you must be both a hit with the ladies and very excited to hear about Sony's new *Gods of War* action title. Drawing inspiration from *Devil May Cry*, *Rygar* and the *Castlevania* series for its gameplay, *Gods of War* will boast a heavy emphasis on exploration and battle strategy. The as-yet unnamed hero of the game will have a pair of sword-like chain weapons that can grab enemies, perform multi-hit combos, and pull off a variety of different aerial attacks.

PSP DELAYED TILL 2005

SPSP recently completed work on the prototype model of its hotly anticipated handheld, the PlayStation Portable. The handheld is expected to debut at this year's E3 in May, but Sony recently confirmed that the pocket-sized wonder will feature connectivity with its big brother PS2. Future titles may even be released as double packs; one disc for PS2 and one for PSP. That way you can play a game on your PS2 at home, transfer your save game to your PSP and then keep playing when you're on the move. The only bad news is that the Christmas 2004 release has been shifted to a March 2005 release. Sony made the delay to ensure that the range of software available at release will blow Nintendo's handheld off the scene.



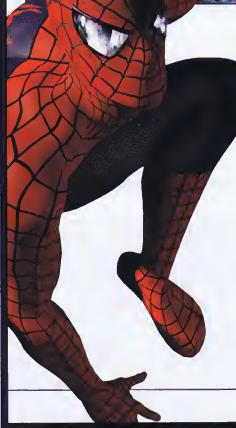
THE PS2 IS OFF THE HOOK

The PS2 continues to become the Swiss Army Knife of consoles, worthy of a place in MacGyver's house alongside his collection of mullet wigs and faded denim jackets. Sony demonstrated a PS2 linked with a USB camera sending live video communication over the Internet. Of course, the technology requires the latest Internet protocol to function, and said protocol has yet to be embraced by the web to any large extent, but there's presently no hardware limitations as theoretically you could use your Eye Toy, Network Adaptor and PS2. So stop reading this and hurry up and revolutionise the Internet!

COMIC POTENTIAL

EA'S MARVELLOUS PARTNERSHIP

Games publisher to create super heroes



While we're used to Electronic Arts creating quality titles based on high-profile licences like *James Bond*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and any one of its numerous sports franchises like *FIFA*, it's rare that it'll design entirely original characters itself.

Which was why we were surprised to hear that EA has made a partnership with long-running comic book creators Marvel, not only use Marvel characters in future videogames but also to design new comic book heroes for Marvel to use in future publications.

The videogames will pit Marvel's most established Super Heroes against the all-new creations from EA. Pending the success of the initial game, EA plans for the new title to become a brand new franchise with several titles released over the next few years.

We're all for new comic book heroes at *OP25 Towers*, so here's hoping that the polish and genius EA so consistently applies to its other licences will work from the ground up on its original designs. A *Wolverine* versus *Medal of Honor* soldier match-up is hopefully not on the cards though. **► TO**

SHAKE THAT ASS

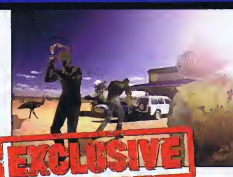
CATWOMAN POUNCES ON PS2

Is Halle Berry a 'lap' cat? We like to think so...



Not only is it a major motion picture starring the world's hottest Oscar winner Halle Berry (yep, she's way hotter than Roberto Benigni) due this coming winter, but *Catwoman* is also set to be a blockbuster videogame from Electronic Arts. EA's UK studio, the same development team responsible for the *Harry Potter* games should have *Catwoman* purring like a spoilt kitten by the time it is released this July.

Gamers will be able to play through the movie as *Batman*'s feline foe, utilising her unique catlike skills, senses and cunning to defeat her enemies. Boasting incredible acrobatic skills, Catwoman can leap across roofs, run up walls, pounce on prey, utilise inimitable 'cat senses', and avoid enemy bullets with feline grace. Did we also mention she wields a leather whip? Meow! *OP25* will be the first with information so be sure to watch this space! **► TO**



RES EVIL HITS OZI

Just as we were going to press we managed to get hold of the first ever screenshot of a top-secret *Resident Evil* game that's been in development at Capcom HQ for the last two years.

Resident Evil: Outbreak is set in small-town Australia and will feature all-Aussie weaponry such as the trusty boomerang, womera and spear, plus shaken cans of warm VB, and will even allow players to ride on kangaroos and emus!

The game's lead designer, Avril Blague, says "We are all huge fans of classic movies like *Crocodile Dundee 2* and *Kangaroo Jack*, and have always dreamed of setting a *Resident Evil* game in the outback."

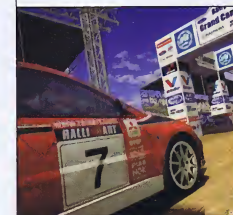
"While we originally planned to release the game in April, Fall is now much more likely."

Check out our exclusive screenshot and remember where you heard it first! **► BS**

GRAN TURISMO DELAY

Gran Turismo 4, the ripe juicy carrot that has been permanently dangling in front of PS2 owners for nearly three years now has once again been delayed.

The fourth instalment in the series that is widely regarded as the greatest racing franchise in videogame history was most recently anticipated for release in Autumn 2004 but according to recent statements made by Sony, GT4 won't be rounding the final bend in the release schedule until Spring 2004. The good news is the game's online mode will support up to six players and online communities will be created around the racing world in order to allow players to chat with one another. We can almost taste it... **► TO**



YOUR EYES ONLY

BOND'S BACK

EA confirms GoldenEye 2

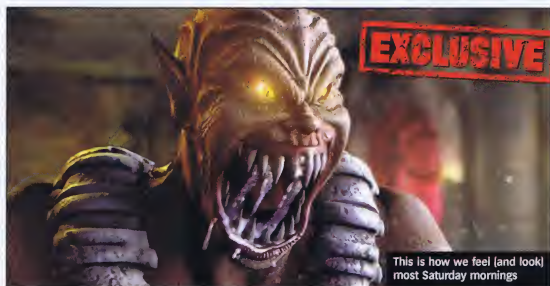
It's possibly the most unexpected piece of news to emerge since that dude found out that the chick he was dating was also a dude in *The Crying Game*, word has it that EA is working on a follow-up to the N64's *GoldenEye*, arguably the most well-loved first-person shooter to ever grace a console. While the team working on the *GoldenEye* sequel won't be the same as the one that created the original (they're busy making *TimeSplitters 3*), if EA recaptures the joy that the old game inspired then we at OPS2 Towers will be shaken and stirred... In our pants. **TO**



GET HOOKED

KOMBAT GAMES ARE IMMORTAL

Mortal Kombat 6 is coming your way



Looky here, it's the first image from the sixth instalment in the long-running gore-packed beat-'em-up series, *Mortal Kombat*.

The follow-up to 2002's *Deadly Alliance* will be titled *Deception* and will apparently feature the return of the beastly Baraka –

complete with Colgate smile and all. Hopefully Midway will build on the reasonably solid fighting engine of the previous game and add a few more of the iconic 'fatality' moves for each character. Get ready for some spine-removing action all over again... **TO**

This is how we feel (and look) most Saturday mornings

THE YEAR THAT WAS

1983

Each month OPS2 revs up the office time machine and takes you back to yesteryear

There were plenty of great arcade games in 1983, but *SpyHunter* was one of the best. If movies are anything to go by, there's no doubt that being a spy is cool. You get to travel to exotic countries, sip Martinis (shaken or stirred), shoot the occasional evil cat and get laid. A lot. Now there's a pretty big suspension of disbelief required to maintain that uber-cool feeling once you stepped out of the *SpyHunter* sit-down cabinet, but it was plenty of fun while it lasted. Originally planned to be a James Bond tie-in, the license was never secured. However, the game itself was the first of its kind: the original assault-driving game. While it appeared later on home computers, the 1983 arcade



version came in two incarnations. The stand-up cabinet and the sit-down cabinet – the latter the more impressive in every way. The cockpit was a dream come true for young gamers and featured a steering wheel, a foot operated accelerator, a high/low gear selector and a host of weapons buttons. You felt like you were really strapped into the G-6155 Interceptor, and with "The Peter Gunn Theme" oozing cool and the steering wheel under your sweaty hands it was a blast. With machine guns, oil slicks, rockets and smokescreens, you were king of the road. You can even pick it up on Midway Arcade Treasures for PS2 if you're feeling nostalgic!

NEED A MAGNIFIER

HARRY UP

Find Pitfall Harry and win the game!

It looks like we were a little too tough on you last month when we hid Harry. We shrunk him down to such minuscule proportions that no one was actually able to find his hiding spot. Because we've still got a big stack of *Pitfall: The Lost Expedition* games sitting on our desk just begging to be given away, and because we're such nice blokes, we've re-hidden this picture of Harry somewhere else in this issue. Thanks to Activision there are eight copies of the game for the first readers who can tell us the page he is on and where he is hidden. This time even your half-blind grannies should be able to spot him. *Pitfall: The Lost Expedition* also contains the classics *Pitfall* and *Pitfall 2*, and is out now. **NP**



HOW TO ENTER Send entries to OPS2@downthetower.com.au with "Find Harry" in the subject line or alternatively send envelopes via email mail to Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1585. Email entrants are entitled to one email per competition only. Entries should be clearly marked and include: The name of the competition, your name, age, email address, phone number (mobile also) and address. All competitions close 19 May, 2004. This comp is also open to NZ residents.

I WANT MY

SHAKE IT LIKE A POLAROID PICTURE

Grammy Award winners PS2 bound

MTV Music Generator 3, the third game in the popular music creation series from Codemasters, is set to feature the funky tunes of 2004 Grammy award winners OutKast along with several other popular artists including Snoop Dogg and Sean Paul. In addition to these artists, for the first time players have

Infinite capabilities to bring their favourite artists together by combining samples from their own music collection in a unique remixed track.

So bin the two turntables and a microphone; all you'll need is your PS2 and a stack of your favourite CDs! *MTV Music Generator 3* is released in June 2004. **TO**



PS2 TOP 10 GAMES CHART

1		FINAL FANTASY X-2 surges up the charts, securing the top spot after only being on sale for less than a week. It's not too much of a surprise though, considering that the Final Fantasy series is one of the most well-known and well-loved PlayStation franchises.
2		NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND cruises around for another lap at the top of the sales charts, even though it's already been on sale for three months. The mix of adrenaline-pumping speed and Gran Turismo-style car modification has proved very popular indeed.
3		CRASH NITRO KART appears in the sales charts at a healthy position. After ruling the platform scene on PSone, Crash's first PS2 game was a little underwhelming, but his new kart racer marks a return to form for the famous lion.

RANK	TITLE	CATEGORY	DISTRIBUTOR
4	Mafia	Adventure	Take 2
5	GTA: Vice City	Adventure	Take 2
6	Sonic Heroes	Adventure	Atari
7	Simpsons: Hit & Run	Adventure	Vivendi
8	Crickets 2004	Sports	EA
9	Rugby League	Sports	Tiny Toon
10	GTA Twin Pack	Adventure	Take 2

PS2 RELEASE SCHEDULE

APRIL

Jack - Volume 1: Infection	RPG	Atari
ATL Live: Premiership Edition	Sports	Acclaim
Alias	Action	Acclaim
Deadly Skies 3	Shooter	Atari
Fight Night 2004	Action	EA
Firefighter: FD 18	Action	Atari
Glass Rose	RPG	THQ
Headhunter: Redemption	Action	Atari
Hitman: Contracts	Action	Atari
Red Dead Revolver	Action	Take 2
Riding Spirits II	Racing	THQ
Serious Sam: The Next Encounter	Shooter	Take 2
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TBC	Take 2
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Action	Atari
Way of the Samurai 2	Action	THQ
World Championship Rugby	Sports	Acclaim

MAY

Cy Girls	Action	Atari
Euro 2004	Sports	EA
Harry Potter: Prisoner of Azkaban	Adventure	EA
Hyper Street Fighter 2	Fighting	THQ
Project Zero 2	Survival horror	Ubisoft
Richard Burns Rally	Sports	Atari
Showdown: LOW	Action	Acclaim
Transformers	Shooter	Atari
Unreal Assault	Shooter	Atari
Von Felsing	Action	Vivendi

JUNE

Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers	Shooter	Acclaim
Dinco	Drama	Atari
ShellShock Nam '67	Action	Atari
Shrek 2	Adventure	Activision
Trivial Pursuit Unhinged	Strategy	Atari

JULY

Gran Turismo 4	Racing	Sony
Spider-Man 2	Action	Activision
Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow	Stealth	Ubisoft

SEPTEMBER

Gradius V	Shooter	Atari
V8 Supercars 2	Racing	Atari



loading...

FEEL THE MUSIC

KONAMI GO KARAOKE KRAZY

"Stop dancing, start singing," say software giants

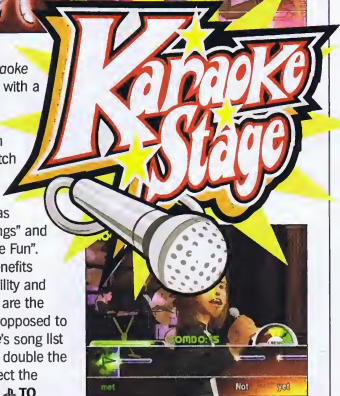


Damn those Australian *Idol* contestants. Their pretentious posing and ceaseless selling of various cola products has convinced even the least talented members of the public that anyone can be a star performer. There's even a subliminal campaign to push people onto the stage; with Guy Sebastian's afro looking like a giant microphone...

But thanks to *Sing Star* and now Konami's *Karaoke Stage* we won't have to endure these watered-down warblers much longer; they'll be too busy belting out tunes with their PS2 to even leave the house.

Like *Sing Star*, *Karaoke Stage* comes bundled with a USB mic and utilises proprietary voice recognition software in order to judge your pitch and rhythm as you stumble your way through such clichés as "Wind Beneath My Wings" and "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun".

While *Sing Star* benefits from EyeToy compatibility and the fact that its songs are the original recordings as opposed to covers, *Karaoke Stage*'s song list will apparently almost double the number of tunes. Expect the dogs to start howling! **TO**



DEATH COMES EARLY

HIT PREDICTION

Hitman: Contracts due in April



A couple of months ago we announced that everyone's favourite hired assassin was returning to the PS2. But before we'd even marked the September release on our calendars, Eidos has gone ahead and fast-forwarded *Hitman: Contracts* to an April release.

In case you were still wondering, yes - this is technically *Hitman 3*. It seems however, that the idea of using numbers for sequel names has finally been choked to death with piano wire and stashed in a garbage bin.

Don't worry too much about the new title; it's still the same old silent and unethical slaying that

we've come to love in the previous two *Hitman* titles, only now with more emphasis on the kills themselves. Much like the recent *Manhunt*, *Contracts* will allow players to perform new 'take down' moves that will make each hit seem all the more brutal.

These screens are from the Romanian Slaughterhouse level, where it's not only animal carcasses that get hung on meat hooks. Developer IO Interactive certainly seems to be making good on its promise that *Contracts* will be "the most disturbing episode in the series". Check back next month for our exclusive review of this brutal shooter. **TO**



Charts can be viewed at www.informbd.com.au as part of Informa's comprehensive database of online market intelligence, updated weekly.



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Another Classic from



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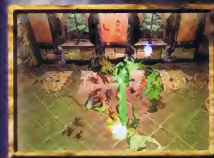


THE HIT SEQUEL BY
AWARD WINNING BLACK ISLE STUDIOS

FORGOTTEN REALMS

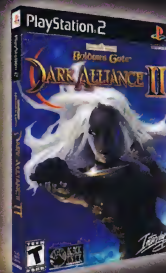
Baldur's Gate

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PlayStation 2

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feedback

Tell the PlayStation 2 community what's going on inside your brain...

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



Your opinions are important to us – that's why we've decided to move the Feedback section to the front of the magazine from now on. If you've got something relating to PlayStation 2 gaming or Official PS2 Magazine that you want the world to know about – anything at all – drop us a line, because we'd love to hear from you. We also reward the best letter we receive each month with an exclusive Atari T-shirt, so get writing!
Email: ops2@derwenthoward.com.au
Paper: OPS2 Feedback, Derwent Howard, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1555



PAD BADNESS

Hi OPS2,

Am I the only person in the world who has a problem with PlayStation joy pads? Sure, they're fine for some games – driving, etc – but only having four buttons on the front of the pad really annoys me when I try to play other games, especially arcade conversions – I can't stand having to use shoulder buttons all the time as they make my wrists hurt. For PS3, can Sony please put six or more main buttons on the front of the pad? Maybe they could

add 'Hexagon' and 'Rhombus' buttons or something. Or they could at least release an official six-button pad for people like me, as most third-party joy pads hurt even more than the regular ones.

Adam Burgoyne, Sydney

We think you're very much in the minority here – almost everyone we know reckons that PS2 joy pads are a genius piece of design. Although we must admit that we got a few thumb cramps this month playing *Hyper Street Fighter II*... Hos anyone else got any changes they'd like to see made to the official PS joy pads, or are you all perfectly happy with the current Dual Shock 2 design?

WHY ARE YOU SO WONDERFUL?

Thanks for the great mag and all the effort you put in. Could you please answer these few questions for me?

1. I have had an argument with a friend that the PlayStation 2 is better than Xbox. Could you please tell me the best game on PlayStation 2 that is not on Xbox?
2. I am only 13 at the moment so will games that are M15+ or MA15+ be around when I am 15?
3. How do you become an "official" magazine?

Thanks for your time!

Martin Chia, via email

1. Nope. We're not getting involved in other people's arguments. We have quite enough disagreements of our own here in the OPS2 office, thank you very much.
2. Yeah, we don't see any reason why not.
3. By being the BEST PlayStation 2 magazine! The wonderful people at Sony recognise this fact by making us their official magazine and giving us exclusive access to everything that goes on in the world of PlayStation 2. On top of that we're able to provide you with an exclusive

The OPS2 Team wants to send out this month's "mad props" to Peter "don't give me" Flack from Macquarie Fields in NSW. We reckon his illo is tops, so we saw it fit to publish his picture for all your visual pleasures!

playable demo DVD every month. Mon, we're so great it hurts.

IT'S CRIMINAL!

G'day,

I'm not one to complain too often about games, but what was with *True Crime*? Okay, it was fun, the graphics were good, and the gameplay was very well done, but come on, how easy was it? Short too. I know they reckon that it has replay value and crap, but these "alternate" stories don't make it that much longer or very different. As I said before, the gameplay was great – better than the gameplay in *Vice City* – but GTA was still a MUCH better game. It just goes to show that you can't beat the original. Anyway, I can't wait for *Sin City* (or whatever the hell they end up calling it).

Always Speaking the Truth,

Chris Topher, via email

Yes, *True Crime* was a little short and a little repetitive but it was also a quality action game. We gave the game 8/10 and we stand by that. We're a little baffled as to why you're complaining to us that it's not as good as *Vice City* – we pointed that out in the review and we scored it two marks lower than Rockstar's masterpiece. What else could we do, apart from sending Tommy Vercetti over to your house to pound a little sense into you?

SONG STAR

Hey guys, great mag!

I know this might be irrelevant but there is a song on Eiffel 65's album *Europop* – I don't know if you remember them but they had that song "Blue (Da Ba Dee)". Anyways, if you grab their album and go to track 6 you will find a song about PlayStation. The song is called "My Console" and it's really funny. It mentions games such as *Resident Evil* and *Metal Gear Solid* – you guys should check it out. Sorry for wasting some of your valuable time.

Abdul Assaad, via email

Thanks for that, Abdul. We have to admit we didn't know about this tune, because after hearing that horrible "Do Be Dee" song a billion times on the radio we were never going to go anywhere near on Eiffel 65 album. You're a broke man!

We've got a video game-related song we recommend everyone checks out – rubbish German metal band Helloween's atrocious "The Game is On" from their album *Master of the Rings*. Sample lyrics:

"Have you seen this little toy, when you're down it gives you joy, you escape reality, delve into its TV screen."

It's awesomely terrible!

If anyone knows of any other songs about videogames, write in and tell us. Is there such a thing as a good song about gaming though?

WHEN IS IT MUNCH TIME?

First off I'd like to say that your mag rocks and you guys are doing a great job. I may not be the only person to be outraged about this matter, but what the hell happened to you guys at PlayStation releasing *Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee* on PlayStation 2? Sony told the readers of *PlayStation 1 Official Magazine-Australio* that they would be bringing it out in November 2000, but it is now 2004 and still no *Munch's Oddysee* for PlayStation 2. But it is out on Xbox and that means if we want that part we have to buy an Xbox just for that one game. You told us that we were going to bring it out for PS2 so what's up with that and where is it?

John Waldron, via email

Whooh there! Calm down, John! Looks like you missed out on an important bit of news more than three years ago, as Microsoft bought the exclusive rights to publish the *Oddworld* games on Xbox. That means you won't be getting any of the series on PS2, at least not in the foreseeable future. *Munch's Oddysee* turned out to be a bit crap anyway, so you really shouldn't be too upset.

MOAN MOAN MOAN

I have a bit of gripe about PS2 games in general. What is the deal with making games too short, with no FMV sequences, bad graphics or just plain sucking? They have the power of the PS2 at their disposal, they have the ability to use DVD capacity instead of 700MB, so why do they constantly dog everyone?

I believe with all that money floating around out there towards these programmers, designers and so on, they could at least step up a notch and create something that is truly brilliant, not something that occurs once every six months.

Valiant Harfoot, via email

Having a big budget for a game doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to be good – you need great ideas, talented designers and artists, and enough time to implement and test everything properly. Making PlayStation 2 games is a very complicated process, and it's only when every single part of that process works perfectly that we end up getting something "truly brilliant". That's why it's important you keep reading OPS2, so you can keep track of the games that manage to get all the important bits right, while avoiding the ones that don't!

HANDS-ON

NAME: FIGHT NIGHT 2004

DISTRIBUTOR: EA

DEVELOPER: EA SPORTS

WEBSITE: WWW.EASPORTS.COM/GAMES/
FIGHTNIGHT2004

LAST SEEN: OPS2#24

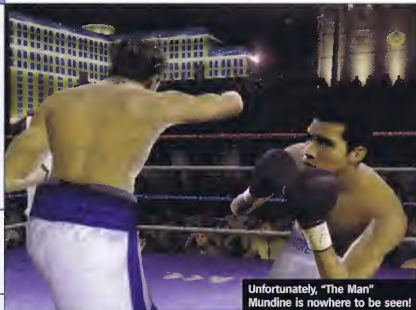
RELEASE DATE: MAY 2004

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

FIGHT NIGHT sees EA going back to the drawing board to come up with features that could finally make boxing sims fun again



The control system allows for lots of ducking and weaving



Unfortunately, "The Man" Mundine is nowhere to be seen!



Excellent physics give knockdowns more realism



BOXING SIM



FIGHT NIGHT 2004

Watch out Rocky, 'cos EA Sports is on the lookout for a rumble!

There's been a few exceptions but historically, boxing games are rarely any good. Sure, they're about fighting – one of the most popular things in videogaming – but because the fighters don't run around or jump or kick or throw stuff at each other, things normally degenerate into two blokes standing a metre apart rapidly smashing each other in the face. And, believe it or not, there's more to boxing than that.

Fight Night 2004 from EA Sports is the first in an all-new boxing series that's replacing the never-great-anyway *Knockout Kings* series. Like *Knockout Kings*, however, you can pick from a selection of current and classic real-life boxers from various weight divisions (the difference in speed between the heavyweights and the featherweights is insane) or create your own fighter from scratch using a similarly detailed system to the one in *Tiger Woods 2004*. Jaw five millimetres too wide? Change it. Hair colour two per cent too light? Darken it. Nose not pointy enough? Sharpen it!

The Career mode is looking very comprehensive. If you happen to pick up a nasty injury or two early on in your career, they'll stay with you for the rest of your life. For example, if you take enough damage to your right eye early on, it's much more likely to cut open easily in

the middle of a World Championship bout years later. And you don't need to be a brain surgeon to realise that that's not a good thing! Success in Career mode will see you earning big bucks. The money will allow you to buy your boxer new shorts, tattoos, mouthguards, bigger entrance fireworks, more hoes. In bikinis and a whole range of other "bling" to help increase your profile!

The boxing itself is controlled with the two analogue sticks. The left one moves you around the ring and the right one throws the punches – flick the stick forward for jabs, hook it around from the side to hook, or whip it from the back to do an uppercut. From our hands-on it seems to be a nifty new system that gives plenty of scope for combos without having to hammer a load of buttons (unlike the *KK* games).

For extra-realistic animations the developers have used a physics system that sees fighters' heads rocking back on their necks as they're hit, with pained expressions on their faces. Knock someone out and instead of always falling to the floor in the same way, real physics will kick in. You'll see legs turning to jelly and buckling, arms dropping to their sides and their head hitting the floor like limp rag doll. Oof! **EL**



HANDS-ON

NAME: **RED DEAD REVOLVER**
 DISTRIBUTOR: **TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE**
 DEVELOPER: **ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO**
 WEBSITE: **www.rockstargames.com**
 LAST SEEN: **OPS2#24**
 RELEASE DATE: **APRIL 2004**

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

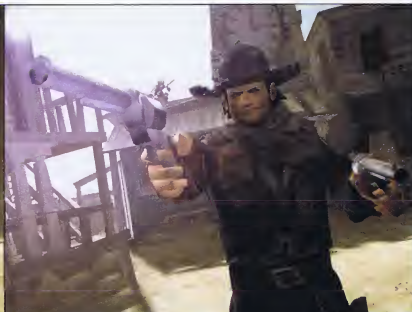
50%

RED DEAD REVOLVER looks great, and the prospect of a wild west adventure without a Jon Bon Jovi song is definitely intriguing!

RED DEAD REVOLVER



The genre generally hasn't been fully realised yet



X FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER



At this stage, the game is looking surprisingly impressive



RED DEAD REVOLVER

It's the Wild Wild West, just without Will Smith

Ah, the Old West. A time where men with nothing but the shirt on their back and a gun in their trousers roamed the land shooting each other. The good old days.

While some of us here struggle to remember where we were last Friday night, there's probably a handful of you that recall the *Red Dead Revolver* rolling demo we had back in August 2002. Formerly being developed for Capcom by Angel Studios, the game was cancelled in December last year.

Angel Studios have since become Rockstar San Diego, so ol' Red's coming back from the dead as a Rockstar title. While Rockstar were originally impressed with the game they do admit they've made a few changes to make sure *Red Dead Revolver* maintains the Rockstar spirit. And that generally means a gritty revenge-driven story, dark humour and a huge body count. We're all ears.

Red Dead Revolver is an atmospheric third-person shooter in an era largely unexplored on PS2. There'll be over 30 different weapons on offer, including pistols, shotguns, rifles and even dynamite. To make use of these is a combat system called 'Dead Eye', a technique where time seems to slow down so you're able to focus on

vulnerable parts of an enemy's anatomy and unleash a hail of lead, inflicting maximum damage. It's a system that rewards accuracy, even though slow motion is quickly becoming the most overused tool in gaming since the advent of cel shading.

Rockstar claim the environments in *Red Dead Revolver* are faithful to the spaghetti westerns of yesteryear, so we can expect bare prairies, dusty towns and old-school saloons. Fingers crossed for an eccentric piano player who'll stop when we saunter in. Everything that's good, bad and ugly about the wild wild west is said to have been thoroughly replicated. Just don't expect Will Smith. Or a giant robot spider.

The graphics look impressive and the level of detail is surprising. It seems the lighting has received considerable attention in particular, and everything from glowing candles to streaming sunsets are looking uncommonly realistic.

After three and a half years of development and a fistful of dollars we're hoping Rockstar can deliver a top-notch western experience. We'll keep you updated as soon as we can get our hands on a complete version. In the meantime, brush up on your John Wayne impersonations. Partner. **LR**

HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER

Life wasn't always like this for hardcore gunslinger Red Harlow. As a kid he lived with his family on the western frontier until one day they found gold and struck it rich overnight. Rather than move back North, Beverly Hills-style, they stuck around. Turns out this was a bad idea, because when word of the Harlow's discovery reached a rogue Mexican general called Diego, he dispatched his bandits to the Harlow farm where Red watched them shoot his father, burn his mother and steal their gold. They say revenge is a dish best served cold, and many years later Red is back to settle the score. Sounds a bit more compelling than *The Quick and the Dead's* plot, huh?



HANDS-ON

NAME: RED NINJA
 PUBLISHER: VIVENDI
 DEVELOPER: VIVENDI
 WEBSITE: www.redninja.com
 LAST SEEN: OPS2 #25
 RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 2004

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

60%

RED NINJA has all the gaming bases covered. Solid stealthy action, gushing gore and plenty of sex appeal are all on tap.

RED NINJA



This isn't what she had in mind when her date asked her to "hang out"

You don't want to play skipping rope with this girl

Kurenai told her date she was "going to split" and got her revenge

X THIRD-PERSON ACTION

RED NINJA

The sexiest ninja assassin we've ever tangled with

Poor Kurenai was scarred for life when the Black Lizard clan attacked and murdered her father, hung her beaten body up on a wire and left her to die. She could have done the responsible thing by buying an extra strong neck brace, getting a lot of therapy and hiring a really good lawyer, but who wants to do that when you can just go all 'vigilante' on their asses?

Following in Batman's footsteps she's spent the last 20 years of her life training every inch of her naughty little body to be a lethal killing machine, pledging to avenge her father's death as violently as possible. This seems to be a common theme with games at the moment. *Starcraft: Ghost's* saucy heroine Nova has had the same upbringing, albeit with fewer crazy ninjas and a lot more interplanetary war, but the concept's still the same. Flick to page 42 for all the details in our exclusive preview.

Getting back to Kurenai and those crazy ninjas, it was a bad move for the Black Lizard boys that they chose to string her up with wire instead of plain old rope because she's thought up some pretty nasty uses for it. Using a fishing rod-style reel she can flick out great lengths of wire to wrap around her enemies and slice them up like

overgrown salamanders. When she's in a really bad mood she can attach a blade to the end of the wire to make even more squelchy messes out of her victims. We're not quite sure why yet but our saucy lass can also attach a blunt metal object called a "Foondo" onto her wire to deliver non-lethal beatings.

The combat system works quite well in Kurenai's many scraps. Usually you try to avoid direct encounters with other ninjas – and especially the samurai – but when combat is necessary the camera locks onto your nearest target, allowing you to keep track of enemies amid all the slashing and gushing blood. As well as her wire, Kurenai can take her enemies to pieces with ninja stars, swords, home-made explosives and even a pair of Wolverine-style claws.

Taking gore to grisly new depths, Kurenai's wire is able to decapitate, eviscerate and otherwise lop off any enemy body part you like. Expect the colourful language to fly just as freely as those body parts when Kurenai starts slicing and dicing. *Red Ninja* also satisfies any pervers in the back row by having Kurenai daze enemies by flashing her jubbles, then rushing in and cutting them in half before they've had time to finish unzipping their fly. Now that's entertainment. **B. NP**

CUT THAT OUT!

The Aussie censors are an odd bunch. They see a car bouncing up and down with two people in it and they flip out, claiming 'sexual violence' because the girl in the car could be killed after the bouncing. Never mind the fact that absolutely everybody in *Grand Theft Auto 3* could be killed. The game was banned for a tenuous connection between sex and violence. Apparently in videogames it's okay to run down the street cutting hundreds of people in half with a chainsaw (which GTA3 lets you do) but it's not okay to hit someone over the head with a baseball bat after you've gotten jiggy. The point of our little rant is that we're concerned *Red Ninja* may be banned or censored because of its loose connection between her sexual advances and the violence that follows. As mild as they are we're just not convinced our scissor-happy censors will be able to resist cutting these 'sexualities' out.



TRY HARDER



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PlayStation 2



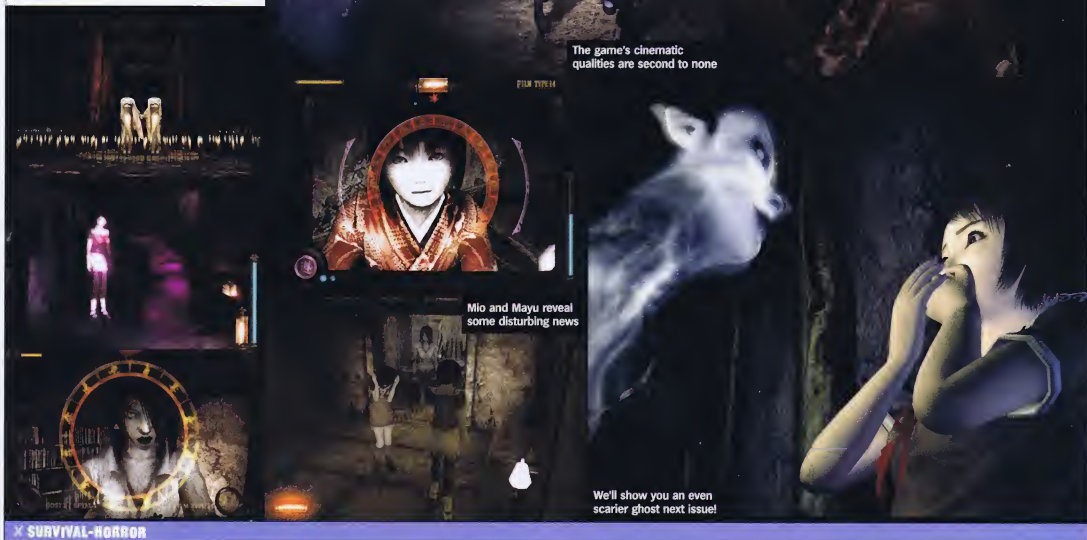
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HANDS-ON

NAME: PROJECT ZERO 2
 DISTRIBUTOR: UBI SOFT
 DEVELOPER: TECMO
 WEBSITE: www.fatalframe2.com
 LAST SEEN: OPS2#25
 RELEASE DATE: APRIL 2004

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

PROJECT ZERO 2 is already proving so scary and entrancing, that members of OPS2 are starting to hallucinate! Aaaaah!



The game's cinematic qualities are second to none

Mio and Mayu reveal some disturbing news

We'll show you an even scarier ghost next issue!

X SURVIVAL-HORROR

PROJECT ZERO 2: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY

The Lost Village is harder to escape than Raccoon City or Silent Hill

Survival-Horror Games 101: zombies, guns, blood and rabid dobermans should be guaranteed inclusions. Sadly, this has started to come true with less-than-original companies using Capcom's "tried and true" formula just one too many times. Tecmo, on the other hand, is set to return with their original, trippy freak-fest *Project Zero 2: Crimson Butterfly*.

Crimson Butterfly is the prequel to the largely unnoticed, but equally brilliant (for its time) *Project Zero*. Even in its almost-complete state, *Crimson Butterfly* is more disturbing than *Resident Evil* or *Silent Hill*. It's a mind-bender, with fantastically edited cutscenes and gameplay utilising inner fears rather than gore; cameras rather than guns and lost souls rather than creatures to propel its heart-thumping story along.

Without the need to blow away enemies with a sawn-off, *Crimson Butterfly* uses cameras [here, a "Camera Obscura"] to see them off. It may seem innocent, but it's more disturbing, given the fact that you are shooting and stealing the souls of lost spirits.

The game kicks off with you – Mio – and your twin

Mayu who has been in an accident that has left her with a limp and scared leg. This is the inevitable point where you realise that everything is not as it seems and where things start to escalate. Mayu becomes entranced by a [you guessed it] crimson butterfly that lures her deep into the forest. You follow her and stumble on "The Lost Village" – a village that no one was sure actually existed. Tecmo have proven that they are true masters of creating mood. Like the original *The Ring* movie, *Crimson Butterfly* has a typical Japanese horror movie feel.

As the gameplay itself isn't completely free-roaming, you are confined to buildings, paths and areas. This however, is almost always used in horror games where propelling the story along is crucial, otherwise the all-important tension could be lost.

The gripes that are proving to be more annoying at the moment are the fact that Mayu often gets in your way and you are unable to move very quickly. At best, your running speed is a very slow jog – we're hoping that Tecmo will address this in the final version as it's brilliant in almost every other department! **—B. KW**

HOT NEWS FOR OPS2!

It looks like your favourite magazine is about to be immortalised! We can't reveal exact details at this very moment, but we can tell you that a member of OPS2 will be appearing in *Project Zero 2* as, you guessed it – a ghost! Yep, we've actually managed to squirm our way into this hot new freak-fest and our next issue will carry all the exclusive information and screens on who, where and when... Look out!



HANDS-ON

NAME: ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS
 DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
 DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
 WEBSITE: www.capcom.com
 LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK
 RELEASE DATE: MAY 2004

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS could go either way. It could be the next party gem, or just an interim *Onimusha* fix.



ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS

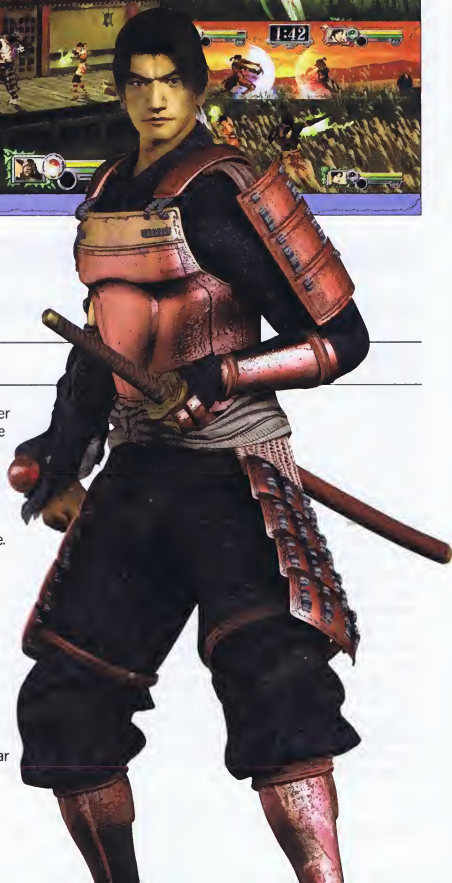
Onimusha gets a multiplayer melee metamorphosis

Onimusha: Blade Warriors pits the many characters of the series against each other in fierce battle. The two *Onimusha* warriors, Samanosuke and Jubel, return along with just about every other character you can think of from the series, and then some. From the lowest katana fodder from the first game, to lumbering demonic powerhouses – they're all here. Of course all the heroes are along for the ride, including the beautiful Oyu and the portly spear master Ekel. The game starts with 12 characters, with more unlockable as you progress through the game.

The main game is the Versus Mode, which supports up to four players. Here you can fight against human or computer-controlled opponents to the death or in competition for souls. Players can fend for themselves in a free-for-all, or there are teamplay options available. The levels are masterfully designed and drip with atmosphere. Whether you're brawling in thick bamboo forests, going at it on tiled pagoda rooftops or doing battle along lonely highways at sunset, you'll always be marvelling at the level of detail.

The interesting twist comes in the single-player Story Mode. You can either play the hero and face Nobunaga's demon armies, or side with the darkness and take up the sword against the puny human forces. As you play through the game, your character can use the souls to enhance your abilities and, in turn, you can use your jacked-up character in Custom Versus Mode. A tutorial mode is also included, so new and old *Onimusha* players can get accustomed to the modifications to the fighting system.

At first glance, the battle mechanics seem simple, but closer inspection reveals that *O:BW* manages to transpose the complexity of the combat from the previous games and still add to it. There's the obvious array of blade attacks as expected, and also advanced techniques like critical counters, charge attacks and magic. Battles are a fine balance between attacking, defending and using the various items that appear on the battlefield. Looking interesting. **A-** NO



HANDS-ON

NAME: VAN HELSING
 DISTRIBUTOR: VIVENDI
 DEVELOPER: VIVENDI
 PLAYERS: www.vanhelsing.net
 LAST SEEN: OPS2#25
 RELEASE DATE: MAY 2004

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

VAN HELSING doesn't have an original bone in its body but it offers a slick mix of *Devil May Cry* and *Max Payne*-style action.

VAN HELSING



VAN HELSING

OPS2 locks and loads the latest monster blockbuster

Enter the *Matrix* may have blurred the line between Hollywood movies and videogames but *Van Helsing* sets fire to it, jumps up and down on the ashes, then tosses what's left in a black whole. We're used to movie-to-game conversions where characters, sets and the stars' voices and likenesses are reproduced in-game. *Van Helsing* has all of that covered, but it goes one big, incestuous step further. The movie's director Stephen Sommers was so short on ideas he based a few scenes in the film around ideas he stole from the videogame. Not that we were really expecting rocket science from the guy who brought us the two *Mummy* movies. We haven't seen anything this silly since Capcom made a videogame of *Street Fighter: The Movie*.

The plot sees monster hunter Van Helsing travelling to Transylvania where he kicks Dracula's teeth in, stitches up Frankenstein's Monster, sends The Wolf Man packing with his tail between his legs and checks Mr Hyde into a drug rehab unit. If you imagine replacing all of the animated puppets and giant birds in *Devil May Cry* with history's most feared monsters then you'd have a pretty good idea of how Vivendi's *Van Helsing* plays.

Like *DMC*, *Van Helsing*'s guns have bottomless clips, placing the emphasis purely on blasting away as fast as possible at the endless waves of ghouls and ghosts. The guns on offer include pistols, a gatling gun and a lethal crossbow. Van Helsing's also covered in any up close and personal encounters thanks to his tojo blades and dual swords.


Fans of *Mortal Kombat* will appreciate his Scorpion-style grappling hook weapon. By firing the hook into an enemy it's possible to reel them in from a distance, then flick them up into the air with a sword swing, before finishing them off by juggling their corpse with a volley of bullets. We were impressed by the game's accurate physics engine. If Van Helsing fires his hook into an enemy that's heavier than him, he'll be the one pulled towards the enemy when the grappling hook retracts. And when you've fighting Frankenstein's Monster, that's the last thing you want.

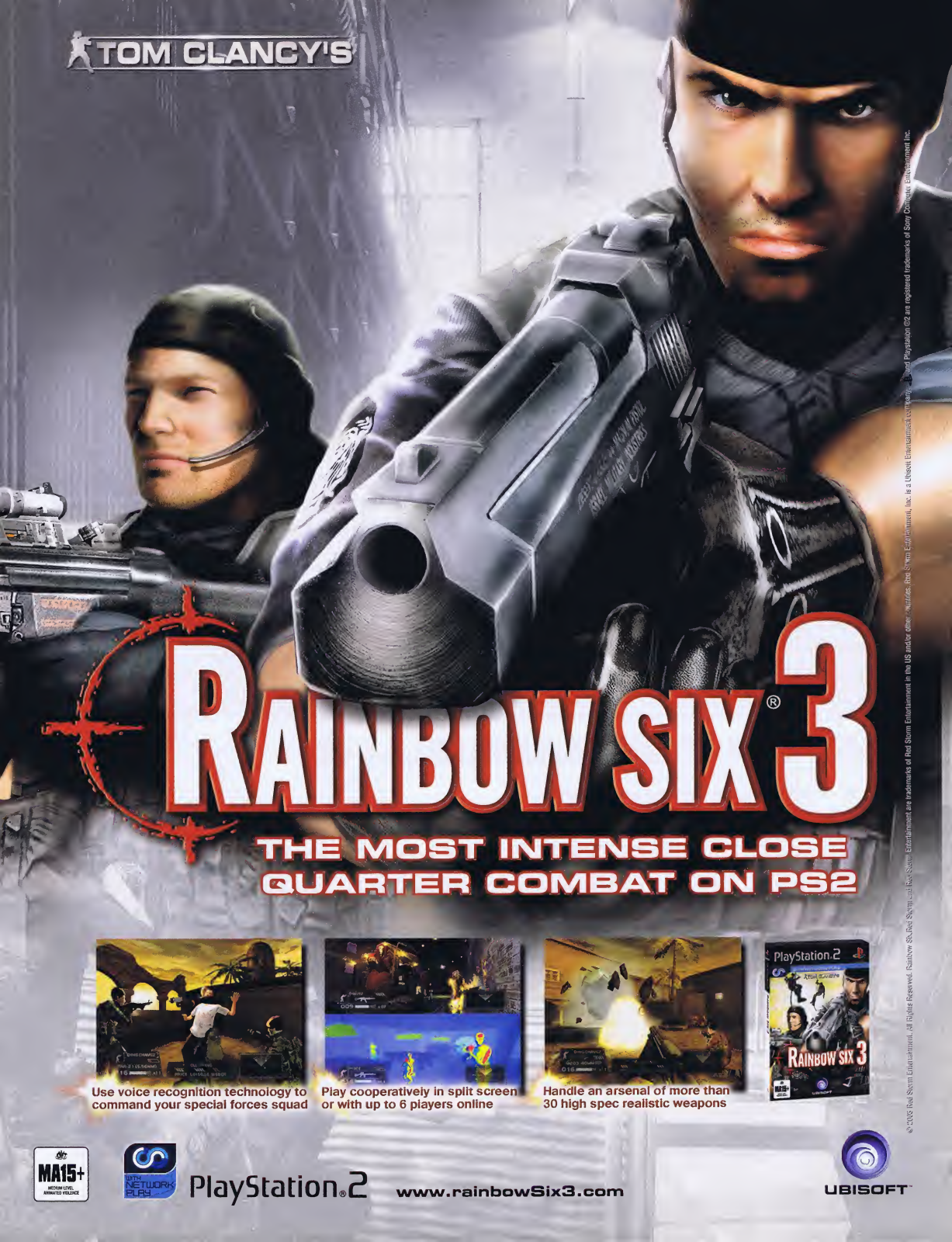
When it comes to recreating the movie's best action scenes, the game delivers confidently. During the game's carriage chase scene Helsing must fire volleys of hot lead at the winged vampire girls, while jumping back and forth between the back's of the charging horses and the carriage to avoid the overly clingy girls' clutches. **NP**

JACK'S BACK

After a shaky start in the soppy outback romance of *Paperback Hero*, Hugh Jackman's career has belted out more hits than Anthony Munding. People started paying attention after his solid performance in the gritty local drama *Erskineville Kings*, but it wasn't until *X-Men* that he became a real player. Jackman stole all of his scenes as the 'take no crap, always ready for a rumble' Wolverine. Since then he's had movie scripts piled up in front of the door and a string of Hollywood hotties lined up around the block. Following *Swordfish* and *X-Men 2*, Jackman has cemented himself as the action hero to beat with his monster slaying role in *Van Helsing*.



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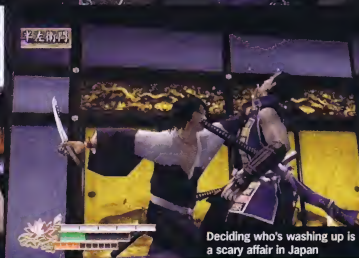
HANDS-ON

NAME: WAY OF THE SAMURAI 2
 DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
 DEVELOPER: CAPCOM/ACQUIRE
 WEBSITE: www.samurai2.jp
 LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK
 RELEASE DATE: LATE 2004

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

WAY OF THE SAMURAI 2 puts in some pretty serious and involved gameplay, and the fighting isn't to be missed. It's one to watch.

80%
 2



WAY OF THE SAMURAI 2

The quick way's short, but the long way's pretty

Once upon a time, there was a highly underrated game called *Way of the Samurai*. Cosmetically, it broke no new ground, and thus was ignored by game buyers everywhere, leaving spectacular gameplay and ingenious storyline devices to fade into obscurity. But lo and behold Capcom spaketh, and a sequel was made.

Eidos' *Way of the Samurai* was a masterpiece of tricky plot convolution and a cumulative learning combat system – a system where you learn new, more complicated moves by using the ones you already have. Learning on the job? Sounds good to us! The engine that drives the plot is similarly based on what you do; if you draw your sword on a friend, then you have made an enemy for the duration of the game.

Way of the Samurai 2 seems similarly driven. Set in Japan's Edo period, you are a wandering samurai in a time when the noble samurai are a dying breed. You stumble across the town of Amahara, where a three-way struggle is occurring between the people of the town, the Magistrate's office and the local Yakuza gang known as the Aota.

There are four basic storylines all told, which meander in and out of each other, based on your actions

and answers and which faction you choose to ally yourself with. Either way, in the 10 days over which the game takes place, you will have to make some difficult decisions which will seriously affect the outcome of the game (so much drama makes it sound like reality TV).

Probably the best thing about the game, however, is the combat – there's a large range of different weapons to choose from and a choice of three different styles to learn. The final game will feature up to 400 moves you can pull on your enemies – undoubtedly one of the richest fighting experiences [outside of pure one-on-one fighting sims] ever seen. The Capcom guys have outdone themselves – games that are generally strong are too often let down by one aspect. And traditionally, that aspect has been the fighting.

Anyone who played the original *Way of the Samurai* will be forgiven for not expecting a great deal from the sequel. In a pleasant surprise, however, the series is looking up and not only are we looking forward to playing the finished version; we have high hopes that this series can do an "about-face" and really reach some lofty heights. The foundations are now in place for something impressive to be pulled from the hat. Let's just hope that Capcom can rise to the challenge. **A- MS**

STRAIGHT TO THE POINT!

As mentioned, one of the coolest features is the fighting. You can study one of three different fighting styles to become a master samurai and your move-set grows naturally. Just from fighting, you organically build your skill. You'll have to learn active parrying though, because if you try to use a parry move and time it wrong, you'll end up with a broken katana sword. The fighting itself is based on actual samurai moves and every aspect of combat reflects that – from dojo training hurting you (rather than the more traditional "videogame training" where you don't get hurt while you're learning) to the bodies that remain in the street for days at a time. And if you walk around with your katana drawn, you'd better be ready for trouble!



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PlayStation 2



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G
GENERAL

WORDS: NARAYAN PATTISON

CRASH & BURN!

The Burnout series has always been about making racing as much fun and fast as possible. Getting your car sideways around corners is fun, going fast enough to melt the speedometer is fun and playing chicken with petrol tankers at 300kmph is definitely fun. Add to that multi-car pile-ups involving more twisted metal than a Marilyn Manson concert and you've got Burnout 3!



BURNOUT 3



If you think of *Burnout 2* as the sort of racing driver who plays his stereo loud, breaks a few road rules and likes to nudge other cars in traffic, *Burnout 3* is the sort of driver who slashes your tyres, cuts your brake line and pushes your car off a cliff with you in it.

Burnout 3 is an infinitely more aggressive and chaotic racing experience than its prequels. Yes, driving at 200kmph on the wrong side of the road, while sliding sideways around a corner and missing oncoming cars by inches is dangerous, but in the previous *Burnout* games you were always trying to avoid actual collisions. In *Burnout 3*, the game actively encourages you to smash into other cars.

Grind your car against an opponent's and you'll be rewarded with "Rubbin'" points – and these translate into more turbo. Smash your car into another competing car and you'll steal half of their turbo and see it added to your bar – usually resulting in a full, flaming *Burnout* turbo bar. If your collision with them causes them to crash into traffic or a roadside obstacle then "TakeDown" will flash up on screen, indicating you've caused them to crash. Smashing into opponents and causing TakeDowns is the most successful way to progress through the races. Not only will you be rewarded with a monster swag of points, you'll also score every last drop of their turbo juice.

The catch is that you have to be going noticeably faster than your opponent to win the collision. Hit them at roughly the same speed and they will only receive a harmless nudge. And you'd better keep one eye firmly fixed on your rear view mirror because rival cars will smash into you and steal your turbo given half the chance.

This is no *Destruction Derby* though. Crashing into regular traffic is just as bad an idea as it was in previous games. You get a little bit of leeway if you're moving fairly slowly or if you just scrape an oncoming car, but when you have a proper smash you'll sure know about it. In keeping with the game's more aggressive style, every one of the crashes now explodes in your face with unprecedented violence. Lose a game of chicken with an oncoming car at 300kmph and your car will flip into the air, spinning faster than an Olympic ice skater, shedding car parts in every direction, before finally landing a few hundred metres down the road in an explosion of sparks and broken glass.

Your fellow opponents will also make mistakes and crash just as often as you will. Successfully swerving out of the way of cartwheeling crash victims will reward you with precious points and extra turbo for escaping the collision.

Smashing into rival cars to fill your turbo bar has fundamentally altered *Burnout's* gameplay. It's no longer about being as fast as possible – it's about using your car as a weapon to be as aggressive as possible and cause chaos on the road. There's nothing more satisfying than causing a six-car pile-up, swerving through the flipping cars, then watching the carnage disappear behind you as you hit the turbo and blur out of sight.

FRESH COAT OF WAX

You might have got the impression from the screenshots that *Burnout 3* is a pretty jaw-dropping game, but until you've →

BURNOUT 3

→ hit the accelerator and seen the action move into top gear, you really have no idea. The game has been made by the same team responsible for the first two – Criterion Games in the UK. The difference is they've stripped the PS2 down to its circuit boards to figure out how to squeeze every last drop of juice out of it. The result is a game that packs almost twice as much detail as the last game, while adding more traffic and more opponents into the mix and still managing a blistering 60 frames per second.

A new lighting system has also been engineered that looks so realistic you can almost see the heat shimmering off the tarmac. Not that it's easy to see at the stupid speeds these cars travel, but look closely and you'll notice that cars even support real-time reflections of the backgrounds.

Of course, when it comes to racing games we want speed – and plenty of it. As you'd expect, *Burnout 3* is far from lacking in this department. Driving around the track, jostling with rival cars and dodging oncoming traffic is fast enough normally to give you head spins, but hit the turbo and things really get ridiculous. The engine will roar, flames will leap out of the exhausts and the background will blur around you as the streets fly past like one of those overly sped-up racing scenes in movies.

BIGGER THAN BEN-HUR

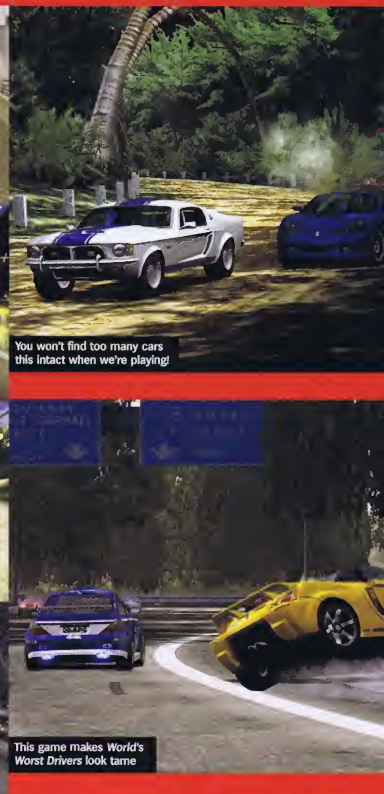
The original *Burnout* copped some criticism for not being deep or long enough to be a monster classic. *Burnout 2* was filled out nicely with plenty of new cars and tracks, along with the brilliant Crash mode, but with *Burnout 3* it's obvious Criterion has realised that size does matter.

A massive Championship mode dominates proceedings with 72 races set over 40 tracks. We're assuming that half of the tracks will be reversed but 20 different layouts is still a lot when you remember that *Burnout 2* got by with 14. The championship mode will also feature a unique tree-style progression system that will allow you to branch out through the game in whatever direction you want.

Considering how much fun has already been packed into every polygon we're not sure how you could get sick of the regular races but just in case, Criterion has broken up the Championship with a variety of unique *Burnout* events.

Lap Eliminator events crank the tension up another notch by eliminating the car in last place at the end of each lap. Battle Race events involve *Destruction Derby*-style carnage, with each car having a life bar that is drained with every collision. Last car standing wins. Survival events get rid of your opponents but give you a set amount of health and see how far you can get before crashing out. Get hit more than a few times and you'll be walking over the finish line. Face Off events are strictly one-on-one challenges, pitting you against a super-aggressive Jam Car. Last, but far from least, are the Road Rage events. Just like the Pursuit mode from *Burnout 2*, you must chase down an opponent and hit them enough times to stop them before they can escape.

The surprisingly addictive Crash mode from the last game has received a huge overhaul. A brand new Crash Championship has been created with a whopping 45 crash zones available for your axel-snapping, glass-shattering pleasure. For any *Burnout* virgins in the audience, Crash events see you hurtling towards an intersection gridlocked with traffic, in an effort to create the biggest and most



10 MORE FEATURES WE WOULD LIKE IN BURNOUT 3

- 1 THE RETURN OF SAVEABLE CRASH REPLAYS
- 2 PEDESTRIANS TO DODGE
- 3 CARS THAT EXPLODE AND BURST INTO FLAME
- 4 CREATING YOUR OWN CRASH ZONES
- 5 FOUR-PLAYER SPLIT-SCREEN MULTIPLAYER MODE
- 6 CAR CUSTOMISATION
- 7 MORE SHORT-CUTS AND BRANCHING PATHS
- 8 A TRACK BASED IN SYDNEY
- 9 AN OFF-ROAD TRACK
- 10 MOTORCYCLES



2/3

AT 6
LAP 3AT 6
LAP 3

Impressively, online play will be equally traffic-filled

expensive crash possible. If you like the sound of an out-of-control semi trailer causing mayhem then you'll be pleased to hear that there will be new heavyweight classes included in the carnage. Criterion has also promised "Hollywood-style" Crash events but no details have yet been released. We're guessing that there will be a series of Crash events that recreate explosive car pile-ups of the kind you see in movies like *Bad Boys II* and *Terminator 3*.

THREESOMES AND THEN SOME

It doesn't matter how smart the computer-controlled artificial intelligence (AI) cars are – even though *Burnout 3*'s are some of the smartest ever seen – smashing your friend's car into an oncoming truck 10 metres before the finish line is always going to be infinitely more satisfying. Multiplayer modes, both online and off, will play a huge part in *Burnout 3*.

Split-screen multiplayer will only support two players but with the online mode you will be able to enjoy the chaos of six-player races. Even with just the two-player mode, the number of AI cars in races has been increased so that there will be a total of six cars competing.

Quick Race, Battle Race and Road Rage will all be offered in the multiplayer modes. The Crash mode will also return with some gameplay types allowing you to compete or co-operate with another car in the one Crash zone.

Criterion is particularly committed to the game's exclusive PlayStation 2 online mode. Unlike some other disappointing online releases, Criterion has confirmed that all of the dense traffic from the single-player experience will be recreated online. There's no end to the dirty tactics six players could get up to on the one track.

So, how much fun is *Burnout 3* going to be? Well, if you think about the sort of fun you could have with Bill Gates' credit card, six randy supermodels and a swimming pool filled with whipped cream, you'd be on the right track! ➔

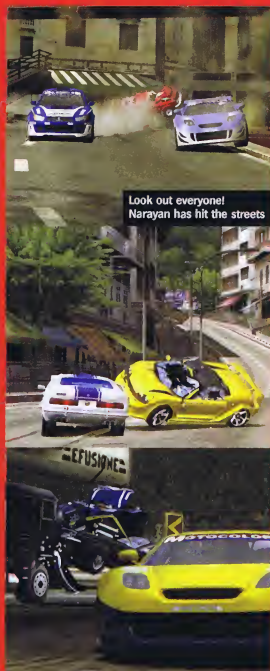
TIME OUT

Before you can appreciate *Burnout 3* in all its fender-bending entirety, you really need to take a look back at the father and granddaddy of high speed, explosive crashes and mangled wrecks



BURNOUT

The Visuals do look a little on the drab side when compared to the sun-drenched beauty of *Burnout 2*, but you'd be surprised at how many solid, original gameplay concepts had already been bolted under the hood in the first *Burnout* game. All the essential ingredients of a top racer had been included. This early classic had the speed, turbo boost and, most importantly, the dangerous driving that has become the series' trademark already in place. Racing through *Burnout*'s streets was equivalent to injecting a few litres of caffeine and adrenaline straight into your heart. The game delivered an intense multiplayer mode that retained all of the carnage of the single-player mode. *Burnout* also boasted the very cool Crash Replay mode that let you tinker with replays of your favourite crashes and then save them to memory card for bragging rights. However, with only nine cars and eight tracks, *Burnout*'s single-player road rage was unfortunately a bit brief.



Look out everyone! Narayan has hit the streets



BURNOUT 2

In the typical tradition of sequels, *Burnout 2* smoothed over weaknesses and gave us even more of what made *Burnout* great. A much bigger game was based around *Burnout 2*'s stunningly detailed 14 tracks. And Criterion sure made you work to unlock all 22 cars across its sprawling series of championships. A Dangerous Driving 101 license test was introduced to make the gameplay more accessible to all drivers. Despite having more traffic and faster speeds, players actually found it easier to navigate through the tracks in *Burnout 2* thanks to tighter controls and more forgiving collisions on close calls. A new Pursuit mode where you assume the role of a police pursuit car trying to chase down criminals added some valuable variety. Easily the most popular addition, though, was the game's Crash mode. Pass-the-controller multiplayer bouts became an office favourite as the OPS2 team competed to cause the most vehicular mayhem. The only real disappointment with *Burnout 2* was the removal of the Crash Replay feature.

BURNOUT 3

BURNING QUESTIONS

OPS2 sat down with the man behind the fastest and most brutal road racer out there, Criterion Studios' Burnout 3 Producer, Alex Ward.

OPS2: After completing Burnout 2, what was the main element that you wanted to improve on with the sequel?

AW: Overall, the team was very happy with what we did in Burnout 2. We pushed the PS2 pretty hard in a variety of areas. If you ask Sony's best tech guys they'll tell you that B2 is one of the highest performing titles on their Performance Analyzer. But there's always room for improvement and where other developers would have given up, the Burnout team are never satisfied. For the next title we started out looking for ways to improve the performance we could get from the machine which would in turn allow us to make a faster, more graphically stunning, bigger, deeper racing game.

OPS2: The PlayStation 2-exclusive online play sounds really exciting. What can you tell us about it?

AW: We sat down and scratched our heads a lot at the beginning of development. We've been following network gaming closely for the past couple of years. We knew that the third Burnout was going to be heavily online, and we noted with interest that many other racing games weren't doing traffic in their online races.

There are lots of games that feature some light traffic but always the minute you start multiplayer bang, it's gone. This could never be the case for us - Burnout is all about ripping up the road in the middle of a normal day and the streets have lots of other vehicles there. So it was critical for us to solve the problem of getting all of the traffic from the offline game up and running online with no hiccups or lag AND still running at 60 frames per second. It took some time, but our networking team is really smart and they got the game running online in no time at all. They were unbelievable.

OPS2: With the online multiplayer mode, have you got any plans to take the Burnout gameplay out of the circuit system and place it into a grid of streets for some Midtown Madness-style modes?

AW: No. The racing in Burnout always takes place on set courses that we define. To some players, that may seem old fashioned but from our perspective, we're all about offering the player the best experience possible. We spend a long, long time designing each yard of road, each junction, each curve, each corner. If we offered up some sort of Midtown experience there's no guarantee it will be fun. The game experience can be all over the place.

We're saying to players, "come and race on these fantastic tracks, marathon events and point-to-point courses - we KNOW you're going to have a good time!"

OPS2: Will Burnout 3's online mode support headset communication?

AW: Yes, there is USB headset support for talking in the lobby. In sports games, they call this part 'trash talking'. I think with Burnout it's going to be more like 'crash talking'.

OPS2: Is there any chance of four-player split-screen or i-Link support for players without broadband?

AW: No. Burnout just wouldn't work in four-player split-screen. There are all sorts of technical and gameplay headaches. We won't be supporting i-Link, mostly because PS2s coming off the production line these days no longer have i-Link ports ...

OPS2: The new 'smash into other cars and steal their turbo' is great. Have you made any other alterations to the classic Burnout gameplay?

AW: Absolutely, and you're some of the first people who've played the game to notice that. Yes, we've experimented with a lot of different mechanics since we completed work on the last game. Some of these are actually coming into play in the new game. This time the boost system is based mostly on aggressive and dangerous driving. To be the fastest and obtain the maximum amount of boost available to your vehicle, you'll have to smash the other guys off the road. A successful smash, or 'takedown' as we call it, will create a whole new section of boost onto your boost bar. However, if someone takes you out, you lose the section you just added. Confused yet? It'll make sense later!

OPS2: The AI opponents in Burnout 2 never quite seemed as aggressive as real people. Have you had a chance to alter this in Burnout 3?

AW: Yes, as the new game is all about aggressive driving, the other AI guys are a lot more angry with you at the start of a race.

OPS2: Will we see any Gran Turismo-style buying and selling of cars or tinkering with car parts in Burnout 3, or is it strictly an arcade experience?

AW: Nope, we'll leave all that to the GT guys. Burnout is all about speeding and racing and winning, not being a car dealer. Man, we could do that though one day, it'd be more like a scrapyard dealer though! [laughs]

OPS2: How many and what sorts of cars can we expect in the finished game? Any motorbikes?

AW: There's a much wider spread of vehicles in the new game, with more of a 'racing' heritage starting to come through. We want the most exciting cars from Burnout 2 (the tuned 'custom series' cars) to be the cars you START with in Burnout 3 and then we really go for it from there. But no motorbikes, I'm afraid.

OPS2: The crashes in Burnout 3 sure look spectacular! What sort of research did you need to do to get them looking right?

AW: We've really gone back to school in this area - and film school, I mean. What we are looking to do is show the best car crashes you've ever seen. Period. Better than any other game, movie or real event. So we've spent a long, long time looking at movies, and this time really trying to replicate some of the film stuff 100 per cent. If Burnout 3 doesn't blow you away crash-wise then we'll accept we've failed.



Burnout fans will be blown away with the latest offering



Unbelievably, you're actually encouraged to smash your car!



OPS2: Other than straight racing, will players be able to take advantage of PS2's online ability for things like trading ghost cars or crash replay data with each other?

AW: Hmm, can't say too much there. You'll just have to wait and see.


OPS2: What are the chances of widescreen and progressive scan support for the graphics freaks?

AW: Of course, we're major graphics freaks too [and we also own widescreen HDTVs]. So yes, definitely 16:9 support, full-screen, full-speed 60hz and progressive scan support.

OPS2: Of the other racing titles on PlayStation 2, which do you respect most and how come?

AW: Well, you'll probably think we're sucking up to EA here, but seriously, the original version of *Need for Speed*, back on the Panasonic 3DO, was a major inspiration for the original *Burnout* game. So I guess we respect the *NFS* guys a lot. And Polyphony obviously - who isn't waiting for *GT4*?

OPS2: Do you think you'll jump right into *Burnout 4* or would you like to tackle something different next?

AW: Who knows. We said one year ago we weren't going to do *Burnout 3* and here we are. So I guess 'never say never' is a good answer this time around... 



Young Adam's first driving lesson didn't start so well



NETWORKING



"Oh, so that's how Karma
Subra position #38 goes..."

Gaming that will turn you on... line

It's been 10 months since network gaming was first booted up and it has taken off like a firecracker in every corner of the globe. But while there are tonnes of people out there already reaping the rewards of network gaming, OPS2 has noticed during its sessions of *Need for Speed Underground* that there's still a lot of room for more Aussie gamers to log on. Unless you live out in Woop Woop, there's no excuse for not being a network gamer. Broadband access has spread like the T-Virus and is now available in most areas. And the price of broadband is coming down faster than an SSX snowboarder.

One of Australia's biggest ISPs, BigPond, is offering broadband access at dial-up prices (see page 40 for details). Network gaming is more than just playing your favourite game against a bunch of friends; there's online communities, tournaments, clans, friendships, rivalries, downloads and lots more. It's the new black, better than sliced bread and the greatest invention since the wheel! So if you haven't experienced network gaming, read on to see why you should.

NETWORK NAMES

There are plenty of network gaming titles out there to satisfy everyone's tastebuds. Here are just a few examples of what the menu has to offer



TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND



Offline: Skate your way to the top in the story mode starring as yourself.
Online: Ollie yourself to the online skatepark and compete in tournaments or mini-games against other online skaters from around the globe. No protective gear required.

SOCOM: US NAVY SEALS



Offline: Control a team of four Navy SEALs in several deadly missions.
Online: Be part of a SEAL team where you'll have real people watching your back and who would take a bullet for you faster than Kevin Costner in *The Bodyguard*.

FROM HERO TO ZERO

Make friends and enemies by simply pressing the right buttons

Just like the Playboy Mansion, network gaming is a community of people who enjoy just one thing. Okay, maybe network gamers enjoy girls AND games. The point is that while blowing away your friends in XIII umpteen times can be great fun, it's only scratching the surface of what you can get involved in with the network gaming community on gamearena.com.au/ps2mag and au.playstation.com

CLANS/PLAYER PROFILES

Do your homework on a particular player or clan before going face-to-face with them online. You can also look for other network gamers to join forces with to take down the enemy. Hoo-yah!

RANKINGS

Need a little work or think you're the cream of the crop? Find out how you rate here and see if you need to practise.

TOURNAMENTS

Want to prove that you're the best? Then sign up here for online tournaments and put in the hard yards for the big day. A good network gamer diet is pizza, potato chips and a case of ice-cold beer...

MEET THE CREW

We can go on about network gaming until the cows come home to put their hooves up on the coffee table, but here are some network gamers who took time away from their wars and races to answer some questions.

HANDLE: 'Silent Killer', 'SodaPop' as secondary handle

LOCATION: Melbourne

AGE: 15

GENDER: Male

WHEN DID YOU HOOK UP TO NETWORK GAMING?

First day of the Beta Trials

WHAT NETWORK GAMING TITLE ARE YOU PLAYING NOW?

SOCOM: US Navy SEALs

WHAT OTHER NETWORK GAMING TITLES DO YOU PLAY?

FIFA 2004, Hardware Arena Online

WHAT NETWORK GAMING TITLE ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO?

SOCOM II: US Navy SEALs and Killzone

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT NETWORK GAMING?

Being able to play online with a TV and talk to people over comms

HOW OFTEN ARE YOU ONLINE? Mostly on the weekends while school is on but during holidays I'm on more than that

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE NETWORK GAMING MOMENT? When I got my first MVP in the Beta Trials

HANDLE: 'Maban'

LOCATION: Brisbane

AGE: 23

GENDER: Male

WHEN DID YOU HOOK UP TO NETWORK GAMING?

I was selected by Sony to be a beta tester of the Network Adapter and to test

SOCOM: US Navy SEALs online

WHAT NETWORK GAMING TITLE ARE YOU PLAYING NOW? Hardware Arena Online

Arena, SOCOM: US Navy SEALs

WHAT OTHER NETWORK GAMING TITLES DO YOU PLAY?

Medal of Honor: Rising Sun

WHAT NETWORK GAMING TITLE ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO?

Gran Turismo 4, SOCOM II: US Navy SEALs, Killzone

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT NETWORK GAMING? Talking to all the great people in Australia - and every game is different

HOW OFTEN ARE YOU ONLINE?

At least once a day, if not more

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE NETWORK GAMING MOMENT?

Learning how to frag people in SOCOM: US Navy SEALs, getting MVP for the first time, and kicking butt in Hardware Online Arena

HANDLE: 'Evil Ghosty'

LOCATION: Sydney

AGE: 18

GENDER: Male

WHEN DID YOU HOOK UP TO NETWORK GAMING? October 17th

WHAT NETWORK GAMING TITLE ARE YOU PLAYING NOW? Tony Hawk's

Underground, SOCOM: US Navy SEALs

WHAT OTHER NETWORK GAMING TITLES DO YOU PLAY? Hardware Online

Arena, Medal of Honor: Rising Sun

WHAT NETWORK GAMING TITLE ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO?

SOCOM II: US Navy SEALs, Gran Turismo 4, FFXI

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT NETWORK GAMING? The community

aspect and interacting with other players around the country

HOW OFTEN ARE YOU ONLINE?

Quite a lot!

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE NETWORK GAMING MOMENT? Eight of us Claymore-jumping off the hostage building in Desert Glory to see who could jump the furthest while taping it



Don't try this at home, kids

HANDLE: 'Nodonn'

LOCATION: Sydney

AGE: 37

GENDER: Male

WHEN DID YOU HOOK UP TO NETWORK GAMING? The week of the Network Adapter release

WHAT NETWORK GAMING TITLE ARE YOU PLAYING NOW? EverQuest... a lot!

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE NETWORK GAMING MOMENT?

Risk: Global Domination

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT NETWORK GAMING? The other network

gamers. Easy!

HOW OFTEN ARE YOU ONLINE? If I'm not working or sleeping, I'm EverQuest-ing

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE NETWORK GAMING MOMENT?

Blowing Spooksnpier away in Hardware Online Arena. It was payback for the thousands of times he's nailed me



HARDWARE ONLINE ARENA



Offline: Blow up tanks, jeeps and anything else moving while doing whatever it takes to keep a missile out of your ass.
Online: Blow up tanks, jeeps and anything else moving against other network gamers who will also do whatever it takes.

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND



Offline: Transform your car from a scrap heap to something so hot it would melt Antarctica.
Online: Race your hot wheels against real drivers who will use their creation to do whatever it takes to cross the finish line before you. These guys will brake for nobody!

MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN



Offline: Take part in the most accurate recreation of the Pearl Harbour bombing.
Online: War has never been fun but here, you can compete in deathmatches or team deathmatches. Lock and load, ladies and gents. It's on!

TOMORROW'S GAMES TODAY

The next breed of network gaming titles

There are plenty of quality network gaming titles out right now as you're reading these words. But there are more on the way. Here's a selection of what to expect in the year to come

GRAN TURISMO 4

The most realistic driving simulation is back, and if the photo-realistic graphics haven't got your engine revving, then check out what's happening online. You'll be able to interact and chat with drivers, then offer them a serving of asphalt, dirt or snow as you put the pedal to the metal on any of the brand new featured tracks. *Gran Turismo 4* will be cruising onto the network gaming scene by late 2004.



SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS

If you thought that the world was safe forever after finishing *SOCOM: US Navy SEALs* then you were dead wrong. The terrorists are back, and they're pissed. Assemble a US Navy SEALs team of up to 16 people in which you can communicate, strategise and yell hoo-yah at. The enemy has been popping some smart pills so expect this campaign to be as easy as a walk through a minefield. *SOCOM II: US Navy SEALs* will shoot through any day now.

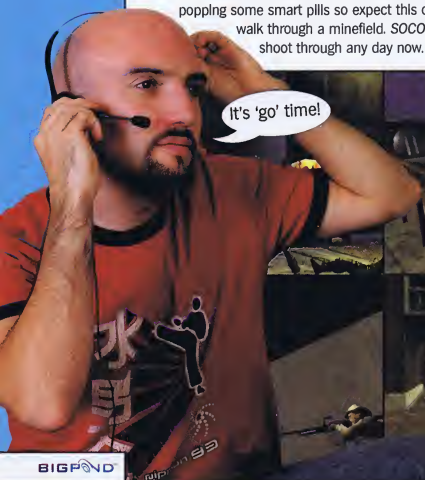
SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN

Gabe Logan has returned, but this time he's running the show. Gabe has hung up his silencer and is now heading up the agency that's trying to keep the Syphon Filter virus under control. Your mission is to keep the virus contained while keeping people alive. Network gamers can shoot their way through nine explosive levels. You'll meet in a lobby where you can discuss strategy via the headset and make a decision on what artillery you want to use. *Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain* will be infecting you soon.



SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

Sam Fisher is back in a brand new adventure. While the single-player mode is sure to set the bar for stealth games, it's the online component that has got everyone trying to be spies so they can find out more. All we know is that Sam Fisher won't be a part of it and that you'll be able to select a secret agent who will compete against other secret agents in a battle worthy of a Pay-Per-View, spies versus mercenaries. *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow* will sneak into stores in June.



RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK

After a disappointing departure, the *Resident Evil* series has returned home and things are looking as good as Milla Jovovich in that wet red dress. You'll control one of eight average Joes from Raccoon City who will have to work as a team if you plan on getting out of there without any hickies on your neck. While there'll be no voice communications, there will be plenty of scares, so it's probably better that your mates don't hear you shrieking. *Resident Evil: Outbreak* will make its shocking return later this year.



STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT

As a 100 per cent online game, *Star Wars: Battlefront* will let you fulfil your Jedi fantasy. Be a part of an X-Wing or TIE Fighter squadron and get involved in an intergalactic deathmatch. Leave your prints in an AT-ST as you stomp around destroying everything in your path. Or just slice up an Ewok with a lightsaber for the fun of it. The force is strong in this one. *Star Wars: Battlefront* is currently in light speed and will come in for landing later this year.



FINAL FANTASY XI

The greatest RPG series ever created takes a giant step in a new direction and goes completely online. Network gamers will control the fate of Vana-diel by volunteering for missions to defend the people of this noble world. You'll be able to create your own *Final Fantasy* hero from head-to-toe. Just make sure he or she has got some good walking shoes because *FFXI* will feature over 100 different areas that will need exploring. Your fantasy will begin sooner than you may expect.



KILLZONE

Sony's been as tight-lipped as a super spy with a vow of silence about specific details on this game, but what we do know has already got us excited. We know it sports a radically advanced graphics engine and we know it'll be the online shooter to beat this Christmas!



BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE...

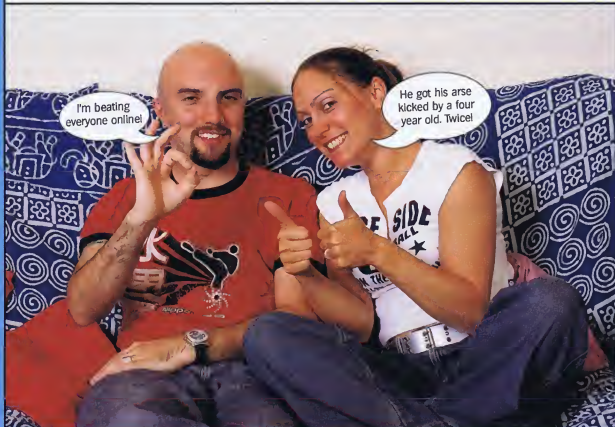
TimeSplitters 3: Frantic action that's sure to be a favourite amongst network gamers
Fantastic Four: A fantastic-looking action adventure that is sure to be a smash
Mortal Kombat V: Shoot a harpoon through the neck of a network gamer
Tony Hawk Underground 2: THUG rocked our world. We can only imagine what THUG 2 will do in 2004



HOOK ME UP

What you'll need to be a network gamer

Becoming a network gamer is as easy as buttering bread. Check out how simple it is with this step-by-step guide



10 REASONS WHY YOU NEED BROADBAND

- You can't play PS2 network gaming without it!
- You can use the Internet even when your sister's hogging the phone.
- If you don't have it your friends will call you dirty names like "xbox lover".
- You won't need to make a cup of coffee while you're waiting to connect.
- It's so fast you can download 25 pics of Britney Spears in less time than it used to take to download one!
- You'll never hear another engaged signal when you're trying to connect.
- You won't miss any more Ebay auctions because the page didn't refresh in time.
- Tune into mtv.com and see what Jackass is doing months before the episodes come to Australia.
- You'll save a couple of hours a week by not having to wait ages for web pages to load.
- Didn't you read the first one? You need broadband to play PS2 network gaming!

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BROADBAND

BigPond's broadband packages get the official OPS2 thumbs up thanks to its great value packages and its rock-solid tech support.

CABLE

If you're living in a major city then there's a good chance you'll be able to sign up for the premium broadband service – BigPond cable at \$59.95 per month. With this package you get unlimited downloads so you'll be able to download as much as you want at super speeds. You'll also be able to play online with network gaming for as long as you like.

ADSL

If you're not able to get cable broadband, BigPond ADSL broadband will allow you to play PS2 network gaming and download from the Internet at very respectable speeds. For \$89.95 a month you can play network gaming for as long as you want and enjoy unlimited downloads at 128kbps. Your speed may drop to 64kbps but you have to download a

whopping 10 gigabytes before that happens.

WIRELESS

For the really flash types who fancy being able to go online from anywhere in the house, BigPond also offers a wireless ADSL broadband kit for \$459. In just 10 minutes you can set this kit up yourself and be gaming online in no time. From then on you can use the normal \$89.95 ADSL broadband account.

The Wireless kit includes:

- Wireless ADSL modem router
- Netgear Wireless USB adapter
- Ethernet cable
- Phone socket converter
- 2 x ADSL filter splitters
- USB extension cable

To start network gaming today, call BigPond on 1800 830 006 to get broadband connected in your home.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED



PLAYSTATION 2 CONSOLE: Obviously you'll need the black beast if you want to enter the world of network gaming. If you haven't got one of these yet then you should give yourself a sharp slap to the side of the head and run to the nearest games shop now!



MEMORY CARD (8MB): If you want to upload your car from Need For Speed Underground 2 just see the latest Driv3r trailer, you'll need a Memory Card to store things like this. We've heard they're also pretty handy for saving regular PS2 games too...



NETWORK ADAPTER: Bundled with Hardware Online Arena, the Network Adapter is your key to network gaming. The adapter comes with a Network Access Disc that contains an introductory video explaining how to set up your adapter and your broadband connection.



HAVE FUN: Once you've plugged it all together there's nothing left to do but turn it on and spend a few minutes signing up your profile, then it's time to grab the controller and get ready to start making new friends – or enemies, depending on how you want to play!



A NETWORK GAME: You'll need something to play if you want to experience network gaming. There's plenty of great network gaming titles already out there and plenty more on the way. You might even have some already in your collection (look for the blue logo on the box).



BROADBAND CONNECTION: You will need an account with an Internet service provider (ISP). In order to get online, BigPond's broadband kit comes with the Industry-best broadband modem, two ADSL filter splitters, a phone socket converter and an installation CD.



ONLINE EXTRAS

Things to do online when you're not gaming

If you're a gaming gladiator then the GameArena is your coliseum. With so many different features that could fill this entire magazine, the GameArena is the place to be when you're not network gaming. **Log on to <http://gamearena.com.au/ps2mag>** to check out all these features and more

FILES, FILES, FILES

GameArena houses all the latest game demos before any other website in the country even hears about it. It pays to be a BigPond customer as there are only 30 slots open to the public and 256 are reserved for BigPond customers. So if you didn't take our advice on page 40 then you could be waiting in a queue as long as Tommy Lee's... well, it's pretty long.

TALK IT UP

GameArena features one of the largest online communities in Australia. Featuring over 30 message boards allocated to various topics and various games, you can stop by and ask for advice on a game, discuss upcoming titles or just rub in your latest defeat to one of your many opponents. Victory is sweet.

GameArena Home | PC Games | PlayStation 2 | Xbox

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- Access to COGS
- Use of messageboards
- Access to Downloads
- Receive our Newsletter
- Post your own reviews

[Click here to Join](#)

[Click here to login](#)

PlayStation 2

Competition: Ultimate Gamers Roadtrip!

Electronics Boutique and GameArena give you a chance of a lifetime to head over to E3. Check out what's around the corner as you see first hand what games will be coming out in the next 2 years and live the excitement of the industry you all love.

Simply pay a deposit of \$10 to secure your pre-sell copy of any of the following Ubisoft games: *Ghost Recon Jungle Storm*, *Ghost Recon Jungle Storm Headset Bundle*, *Spinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*, *Far Cry* at a participating Electronics Boutique store. Your deposit will be deducted from the final purchase price which is payable when you collect your games. Then write your name, full address, mobile phone number, email address and date of birth on the official entry form provided, and write in 25 words or less why you want to go to E3. Then simply give your completed entry form to the retailer to enter.

As a special offer to GameArena members, Electronics Boutique is also offering 10% off RRP for members who take in the electronic voucher for any of the 3 amazing titles on offer. Of course, you need to pre-order before the game hits the shelves, so get in there early so as not to miss out.

[Enter Competition!](#)

NEWSLETTER

Subscribe to the newsletter for a weekly dose of GameArena.

NETWORK GAMING

Imagine challenging gamers around the globe to a skate-off in Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4. Imagine showing off your superior driving skills to players in all suburbs by screeching round the tracks in

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Nikko

Forum Posts: 1
Total: 1
Location: Melbourne, Victoria

Posted: 10:24am 10/10

u can't play g13 online, only via i-link

Bigkev

Forum Posts: 2
Total: 543
Location: Sydney, New South Wales

Posted: 12:07pm 10/10

maybe u can trick the ps2 to think you are us link

Sorrow

Forum Posts: 1
Total: 856
Location: Brisbane, Queensland

Posted: 12:07pm 10/10

.... g14 will be online, but g13 isn't

skegman01

Forum Posts: 2
Total: 680
Location: Queensland

ok lets get some things straight it is g13 aspect not g13a and no g1 link

[SIL] sniper

Which voice communications solution do you prefer for gaming?

- Ventrilo
- TeamSpeak
- Don't use either

[SUBMIT](#)

NEWS FLASH

Find out the latest information on all the upcoming network gaming titles here. What modes will *TimeSplitters 3* have? When will *Final Fantasy XII* arrive? What is *Burnout 3* like? Of course, most of our readers will already know a lot about these games already, but you can never hear too much about games as good as these. So, for all your online gaming news make your way over to the GameArena news section sooner rather than later. You can even see some of the games in action by downloading videos of them.

WHO WANTS TO BE A WINNER?

There are loads of competitions happening every week at GameArena. The latest major prize is a trip to this year's E3 videogame trade show in Los Angeles. Simply pay a deposit of \$10 to secure your pre-sell copy of any of the following Ubi Soft games: *Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm*, *Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm Headset Bundle*, *Spinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow* and *Far Cry* at a participating Electronics Boutique store. Your deposit will be deducted from the final purchase price, which is payable when you collect your games. Write your name, full address, mobile phone number, email address and date of birth on the official entry form provided, and write in 25 words or less why you want to go to E3. Hand over your completed entry form to the retailer to enter, and sit back and wait for a phone call. It couldn't be easier!

HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION: GAME DESCRIPTION

25 Feb

Genre: Adventure
Support: Single
Publisher: Atari
Release: 27th February 2004
Rating: M15+
Players: 1
Network: No

GameArena Rating

Overall Rating: **Good**

Game Play
Graphics
Sound
Multiplayer/Online

No GameArena Members have rated this game.

[Rate/Review this Game](#)

GAME DESCRIPTION

Twenty years after the devastation caused by the Bloody Mary Virus, a new order emerged based on two distinct but totally independent worlds, divided by the ultimate consumerist society - 'Above' and 'Below'.

'Above', a glittering metropolis of glass and steel towers, entwined by elevated highways, its citizens controlled by ever-present media and the powerful corporations behind it. 'Below' is the home to criminals, undesirable and misfits. Meeting all the needs of 'Above' in return for the right to survive. Society's conscience wiped clean.

Maintaining law and society order is veteran Headhunter Jack Wade, older, wiser and battle hardened. At his side is the reluctant new sidekick, the rebellious street kid Leesa X. Whether ripping up the highways of the silver metropolis on a super bike or stalking the criminal masterminds of the shadowy underworld, they are led into the greatest danger of their lives and must overcome something much more sinister than a simple human threat. Each must face their darkest fears. Together they must redeem a world facing chaos...

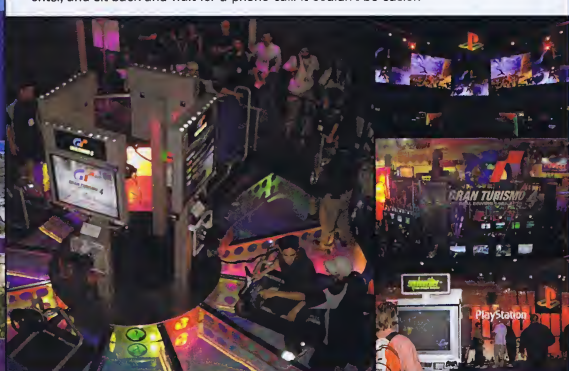
KEY FEATURES

- 2 playable characters: Jack Wade & Leesa X, each with unique abilities, weapons and style.
- Epic storyline based on two distinct worlds, comprising of unique mission

HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION LINKS

- Game Description
- Game Reviews
- Screen shots
- Game Strategy/Guide
- Cheats
- Downloads

Release: 27th February 2004





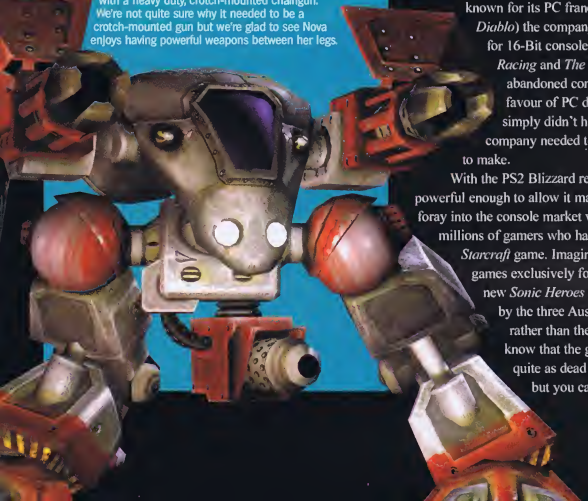
WORDS: NARAYAN PATTISON

STARCRRAFT GHOST

This super Nova might just be the next Lara Croft

MECH MY DAY

Hiding Nova's super hotness inside this tin can may be a crime against humanity but its firepower is a lot of fun to use. As well as the Mech's ability to enhance Nova's strength to ridiculous levels for some powerful melee attacks, it also comes with a heavy duty, crotch-mounted chaingun. We're not quite sure why it needed to be a crotch-mounted gun but we're glad to see Nova enjoys having powerful weapons between her legs.



Creating a *Starcraft* sequel on PlayStation 2 seems like an odd move considering the series already has such a huge following on PC, but the decision allows Blizzard to tap into a brand-new audience. Although Blizzard is most well known for its PC franchises (*Starcraft*, *Warcraft* and *Diablo*) the company has also been responsible for 16-Bit console classics like *Rock 'n' Roll Racing* and *The Last Vikings*. Blizzard abandoned consoles in the early '90s in favour of PC development because they simply didn't have the 3D power the company needed to create the games it wanted to make.

With the PS2 Blizzard realised that the machine was powerful enough to allow it make an amazing game and its foray into the console market would allow Blizzard to reach millions of gamers who had never even played a *Starcraft* game. Imagine if Sega was still producing games exclusively for its Dreamcast console. The new *Sonic Heroes* game would only be played by the three Aussies who bought Dreamcasts, rather than the 1.1 million PS2 owners. We know that the gaming scene on PC isn't quite as dead and buried as the Dreamcast, but you can't fault Blizzard's logic.

Once the decision had been made to make the PS2 the format of choice for the project, *Starcraft* seemed like the perfect fit. "We've always wanted to go back into our *Starcraft* universe", explains *Starcraft: Ghost* Producer, John Lagrave.

DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HISTORY

You've probably heard of the *Starcraft* PC games that *Ghost* is based on but your Terran history probably isn't as strong as it could be, so here's a little *Starcraft* Modern History 101. There are three main races that populate the universe of *Starcraft*: humans, zerg and protoss.

Unfortunately, these three races aren't happy to kick back on their anti-gravity couches and watch the latest episodes of *Days of our Intergalactic Lives* on their 3D holo-tellies. They want to take over the galaxy, preferably by kicking a lot of alien butt along the way. The star of the game, Nova, is a human member of the Terran Dominion.

To ensure that the humans are competitive with the stronger alien races they rely heavily on technology. You'll see most of the soldiers getting about in ridiculously oversized battle armour and favouring the use of tanks, dropships and battleships. To handle situations in which the brute force of direct attacks doesn't work, the humans started genetically engineering a breed of super warriors – the Ghosts. And that's where Nova comes in.





Nova's basically the James Bond of World War 17. When all else fails a Ghost unit is dispatched to sneak in and assassinate enemy leaders, gather intelligence or destroy enemy installations from within. She's been trained from birth to be a super soldier, so basically she's exactly the sort of hard-arse bitch you don't want on your case.

The enemy alien arses that Nova will be kicking belong to the bloated cockroach-like zerg and the ET on steroids-style protoss. The protoss don't have huge numbers on their side but they're highly intelligent and their superior strength means they can rip out your entrails and make balloon animals out of them before you've had time to say "ouh, what's that funny feeling in my stomach?" The zerg on the other hand swarm around their enemies in plague proportions. Their intelligence consists of a 'see enemy, try and bite enemy' mentality. They're far from harmless though, because they have a hive mind that allows them to alert every zerg within a hundred metres to your presence.

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Rather than follow the footsteps of futuristic FPS titles like *TimeSplitters 2* and *Red Faction 2*, Blizzard has again chosen to brave new territory by making *Ghost* a third-person shooter. This decision was made because the team didn't want to focus exclusively on fast-paced action. "If we'd wanted to go for straight action we probably would have made *'Starcraft: Marine'* and given you a huge heavy armoured suit with a big machine gun, and let you just plough through stuff," Lagrave explained.

Being able to see your character during the action worked perfectly for stealth games like *Metal Gear Solid* and *Splinter Cell*. And when you look at *Ghost* you can see it has modelled itself much more around these games. Peeking around a corner, sneaking up behind an enemy, snapping their neck and hiding the body just doesn't work in an FPS. Nova also interacts with the environment often, whether it's leaping over obstacles or hanging from ladders with her legs while she snipes enemies.

The main way that Nova differentiates herself from other stealth legends like Solid Snake and Sam Fisher is through her "Psi abilities". By using her mental energy Nova is able



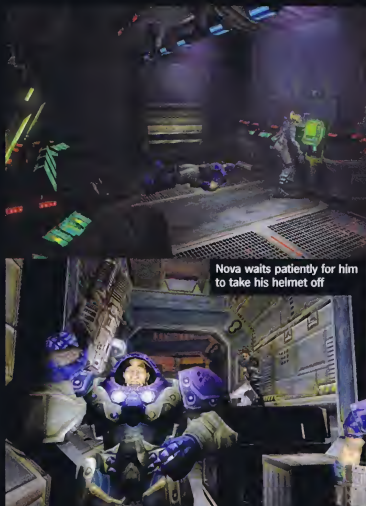
Kre-urg-ak admires his new landscaped water feature

NOW YOU SEE HER, NOW YOU DON'T

The ability to turn invisible is arguably one of the coolest elements in the entire game. As soon as she activates the cloak her body shimmers for a second and then goes transparent (if only it was just her clothes). Nova can now wander right up to guards and shoot them in the face before they know what's going on. Make sure you don't miss though because the cloak is disabled as soon as you fire the gun. If the enemy isn't dead in a split second, you will be.



You almost feel sorry for those alien suckers



Nova waits patiently for him to take his helmet off



It looks like love at first infra-red scan

to make herself invisible, slow down time or see the world through a thermal vision of sorts.

While a lot of games have used night vision and thermal vision in gimmicky ways, like darkening a section of the level just so you need to use the goggles, Lagrave included the special vision mode primarily to overcome a weakness in the genre. "It's so frustrating to play science fiction games, because there's so much Christmas tree lighting being used," Lagrave complained. "All you can do is run up to a panel and start jabbing buttons to see if you can activate anything. Sometimes they try to make the actual working buttons look different, but invariably it doesn't work."

With Nova's Psi-sight she can see the amount of power surging behind a switch more clearly than the veins sticking out of a struggling weightlifter's forehead. This means that if you need to find the door switch in a room full of buttons and flashing lights, glancing around in Psi-sight will have the switch lighting up faster than a chain smoker after sex. As well as switches, Psi-sight comes in very handy for spotting hidden technology like pop-up gun turrets and the override boxes for security cameras. Really calculating stealth assassins can even use the sight to quickly assess patrol routes by looking for the slowly fading footsteps of passing guards.

The advantages of dropping into Psi-cloak and sniping enemies while you're invisible are fairly obvious, but it was never going to be that easy. Shoot your gun and you'll become visible again. Run out of Psi energy and you'll have to recharge before you can use it again. And it goes without saying that all three races have technology capable of scrambling your cloak (resulting in a very cool looking effect as patches of invisibility ripple all over Nova's (hot) body). Regular human soldiers can't see through Nova's cloak but if they hear her do something or their suspicion is aroused for some reason they will call for a backup squad that carries shoulder-mounted cloak scanners. The cloak ability is least effective when going up against rival Ghost units. Like Nova, they have the ability of Psi-sight, allowing them to see her perfectly whether she is cloaked or not.

Nova's third Psi ability is the *Matrix*-inspired ability to slow time down. Psi-speed can get Nova out of a pinch when she is surrounded by a number of enemies. Once the speed is engaged all of the enemies will slow down to half speed, while you're able to weave in and out of them

faster than a kid on a red cordial high in a room full of pensioners. The difference is you'll be leaving a pile of corpses behind you.

During some of the advanced puzzles later in the game, Nova will need to use a combination of Psi abilities. While scouting her way through one of the game's alien worlds we saw Nova encounter a huge defence cannon that needed to be destroyed. Unfortunately its shields were more than capable of withstanding anything her weapons could dish out. The only way to destroy the cannon was to use Psi-cloak to slip by the patrolling guards, allowing Nova to sneak in close near the cannon's shield generator. While the shield generator wasn't shielded itself, it did have heavy armour spinning around it. By using Psi-sight Nova was able to find the weak spot in the centre of the generator, then slow the spinning armour down with Psi-speed to a point where she could hit the weak spot through one of the brief gaps between the rotating blades of armour. Even after all this work Nova still needed to call down a nuclear air strike to blast the unshielded cannon into its component atoms.

BRIVING AMBITION

When you get sick of all the sneaking around and shooting people in the back, there's always the ability to hop into either of the game's two battle vehicles for some explosive fun. If you've been disappointed with the quality of Mech games on PS2 then you'll have a blast with *Ghost's* Mech. Nova is able

to strap herself into a 10 foot tall, heavily armoured Mech and batter her enemies to pulp ala Ripley vs the alien queen in *Aliens*.

If mechanised fisticuffs aren't your bag then the assault tank will be. This tank is so huge Nova doesn't even stand as tall as its caterpillar treads. It comes with a huge rotating cannon that can make tin cans out of entire squads of enemy marines with one shot. When you don't need to stay mobile the tank also has a pair of metal supports that can be used to steady and raise the tank for long distance shots with the sort of accuracy the Yanks can only dream about.

For any doubters sitting in the back row, grumbling something about Blizzard selling out by turning its strategy game into an action game, let us assure you that *Starcraft: Ghost* is going to be one long roller coaster of science fiction excitement. For one thing, it's about 27.569 times more exciting than any strategy game, even if you were playing that strategy game while bungee jumping from a fighter jet in the middle of a dogfight with six other jets.

It's kind of like *Metal Gear Solid* in space, and on steroids, but it's much more. It'll be smarter, more fun and better looking than *MGS2*. Don't get us wrong though, we're as keen to play *Metal Gear Solid 3* as the next bloke but for our money, we reckon playing with a cyber hottie who'll leave a tent in your pants big enough to keep 20 campers and their 4WDs happy, sounds like more fun than eating snakes! (Not that there's anything wrong with that!) **B**

TANKS FOR COMING

If you consider that those armoured marines are about one and a half times as tall as Nova, you start to get an idea of the immense size of the Siege Tanks. What you can't see is how much fun they are to drive. Turning squads of aliens into rainbow-coloured squelchy messes and hearing them squeal in agony as you run them over is definitely fun!

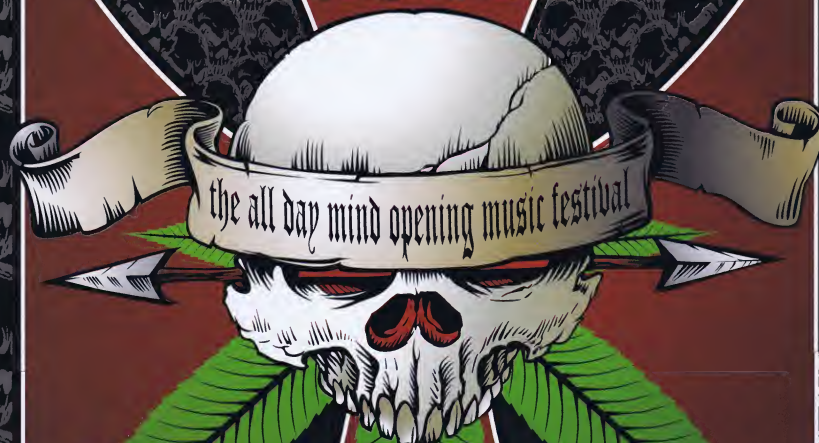


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CYPRESS HILL - SNOOP DOGG - BONE THUGS N HARMONY
KOTTONMOUTH KINGS - EVERLAST - CIRCLE JERKS

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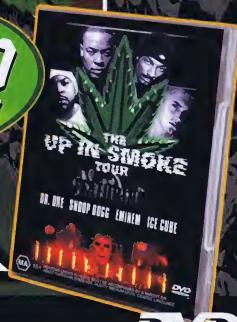
PHOTO GALLERY

2 BEHIND THE SCENES FEATURETTES!
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REVIEW CHARTER

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reviews are the best in the business. Our crack squad of reviewers play the games longer, harder and better than anyone else. And we absolutely love what we do.

It's this dedication that means you can trust our scores above anyone else's. Whether a game's superb or sewage, our experts will tell it like it is with buckets of opinion rather than a few cheap gags and some PR nonsense. Our experienced reviewers have written for the game industry's most revered publications, both here and overseas. What's more, our writers have plenty of 'heritage' in the industry, having a collective history spanning into decades. Rest assured that these are opinions you can trust.

Next time you head off to spend your hard-earned cash on a PlayStation 2 game, make sure you read our reviews first.

REVIEW RATINGS

HERE'S WHAT OUR REVIEW SCORES STAND FOR:

- 10/10** Nigh on revolutionary. A game that could change the face of gaming forever
- 09/10** A truly astonishing game. If you have a PlayStation 2, you need this now
- 08/10** Highly recommended
- 07/10** Good, solid fare that's definitely well worth a look
- 06/10** Better than average, and ideal for hardcore fans of the genre
- 05/10** An average game
- 04/10** Poor, but still with the odd moment
- 03/10** Extremely disappointing
- 02/10** To be avoided
- 01/10** Beer mat

THE OPS2 AWARDS

We don't hand out high scores for nothing, so when you see one of these, you'll know it's a sign of quality. Look for them on game boxes.



The Gold Award is a rare gem and only to be given to games that score that magic 10/10. This score indicates gaming of simply incredible quality!



The Silver Award is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!



The Bronze Award is for games that score 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.

DVD / MUSIC / MEDIA
media

DVD RELEASES

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Battle Royale: Collector's Edition/S.W.A.T./
Scarface: Special Edition/Red Dwarf Season IV



RISE TO HONOUR.....48

Is it a game or a movie? It's both! Frantic Kung Fu action starring Jet Li!

THIS IS SOCCER 2004.....52

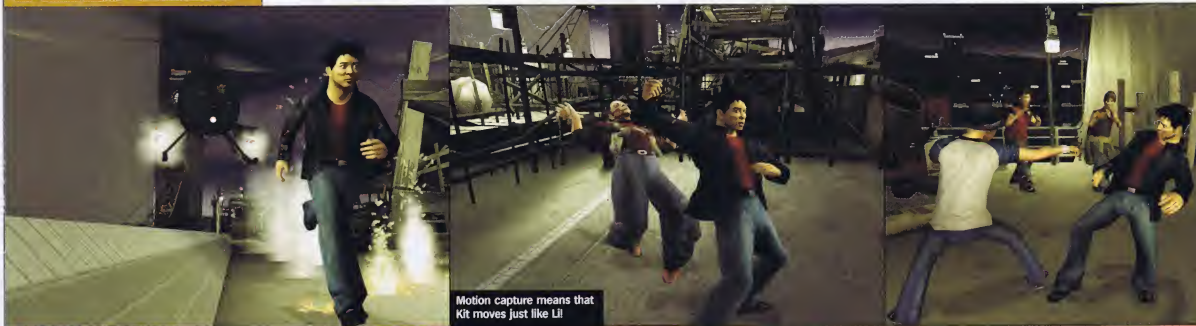
Sony's own simulation of the 'beautiful game' gets its annual upgrade, and FIFA had better watch its back...

PITFALL: THE LOST EXPEDITION.....54

One of gaming's earliest stars, Pitfall Harry, returns for a jungle quest to rival Indiana Jones' finest moments.

- 56 MTX: MOTOTRAX
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- 74 HYPER STREET FIGHTER II: ANNIVERSARY EDITION
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ACTION

RISE TO HONOUR

The biggest names in Hong Kong action cinema come together on PS2...

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
DEVELOPER: SCE AMERICA
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: APRIL
WEBSITE:
WWW.RISETOHONOUR.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: YES
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

With many other action movie stars appearing in videogames, it was only a matter of time before Jet Li scored one. Starting in scores of films in both the East and West, Li's rapid-fire style make him on excellent basis for a no-holds-barred epic action game.

Rise To Honor slips you into the stylish leather jacket of Kit Yun, a Hong Kong undercover cop on an assignment infiltrating the Chinese Mafia. Through a twist of fate, Kit's long-lost childhood sweetheart somehow gets caught up in their dastardly plans and Kit is forced to go AWOL to find her. His search takes him to the foreign shores of the USA, where he must find his lady-friend before the thugs get to her and get to the bottom of their plot.

RTH represents a massive undertaking by Sony Computer Entertainment America. At considerable cost, SCEA essentially imported the ingredients of a Hong Kong action film and went to work creating a movie in their extensive motion capture studios. With Kung Fu legend Jet Li in the starring role, and experienced director Corey Yuen calling the shots on the set it was always going to be a rollercoaster ride of thrills and spills. Every single fight sequence you experience in the game was choreographed by Yuen and performed by Li and his team of professional martial artists. The game is probably the finest example of applied motion capture that has been seen to date.

SEVEN SHADES OF... SHAO LIN

The unarmed fighting system used in RTH was somewhat of a risk. The system of directional attacks using the right analogue stick has been used before (*Blade 2*), with disappointing results. This time around though, there's no such issue. After growing accustomed to the uncommon practice of slogging the right analogue stick to attack your assailants, it soon becomes as natural as the button-mashing that you're used to.

Kit's attacks remain faithful to Li's classic Wu Shu

style, with short, sharp attacks intermingled with wild spinning roundhouse kicks, graceful crane punches and fierce tiger palm strikes. Particularly effective combos will occasionally have their knockdown blow accompanied by a short slow-mo sequence. The slow-mo adds extra emphasis to the blow and because they don't use it too often, and it's fairly short, it doesn't become irritating. In frantic battles, it actually allows you a moment to get your bearing and ascertain your next line of attack.

At close quarters, Kit can grapple his opponents into a variety of throwing attacks, including trips, hip throws and more exotic variants. Like your standard attacks, you can choose the direction that Kit throws his enemy. You can use this to your tactical advantage by chucking your foe into his buddies to give you more breathing room, or throw them through stacked crates or restaurant tables for extra damage.

I'M STILL JET LI FROM THE BLOCK

Blocking is no longer a static pose where your character simply folds their arms and becomes momentarily immune to attack. Holding the block button puts Kit into a defensive stance, but instead of holding rigid against the blows, he will dodge and repel each individual attack. If someone throws a punch at Kit, he'll slap it aside or weave out of the way. High kicks are ducked or sidestepped and low kicks are deftly leaped over or interrupted in true Li style with a sharp kick to the attacker's shin. Kit can block as long as he has energy remaining in his block gauge – which empties with each defence but quickly refills when you stop blocking.

As the fight continues and you land some successful attacks, Kit's adrenaline levels rise – like a super combo meter in a fighting game. As the meter fills, you can use

BETTER THAN

THE BOUNCER

WORSE THAN

TEKKEN 4

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Authentic action movie feel. It's almost as much a movie as it is a game!

What they need to fix

The storyline seems to have a few gaps and it's also a tad short...

GET MOVIE

With ten years of rigorous training under his belt, Jet Li scored his first acting role before the age of twenty.

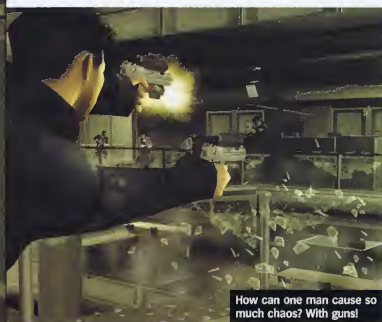
With his boyish charm and amazing skills, Li went on to star in dozens of films, including the classics *Once Upon a Time in China*, *Fist of Legend* and *Hitman*.

His martial arts prowess has also taken him to Hollywood alongside Mel "Stark Raving Mad" Gibson in *Lethal Weapon 4* as a merciless assassin. Now, Li has gone on to become a superstar himself and has played the lead in several other Western releases, including *The One* and *Cradle 2 The Grave*.





Who's the complete hard man? He's more than just fists!



How can one man cause so much chaos? With guns!

THE MAN BEHIND THE MELEE

Hook Kong action flick director extraordinaire Corey Yuen used his extensive experience in martial arts films to craft the choreography for every fight scene and action sequence. Yuen has directed over 30 motion pictures, but has also been involved in the production of a lot more. Aside from working extensively with *Yin Yang*, he has also worked alongside other martial arts greats, including (enough) Jean-Claude Van Damme, Jackie Chan and the late, great Bruce Lee.



It for several purposes. The main one you'll be using is counter-attacks. These can be used to interrupt a foe's attack, giving you the ability to turn the momentum of the fight back against them, or to spin-kick your way back to your feet after being knocked down. When your adrenaline bar is fully charged, holding down the counter button transforms Kit temporarily into a raging tornado of fists and feet. In this mode, simple attacks become superhuman assaults as Kit busts out flurries of punches and eye-popping flying bicycle kicks.

THE ART OF NO-PUNCH FIGHTING!

The fun really starts when you start utilising the interactive environments. Most things that aren't nailed to the wall (and some that are) can be busted up or used as a weapon. Chairs, crates and bins make excellent projectiles, and your wanton destruction can

well versed in dealing out double-listed 9mm Justice himself. To show that he's a complete hard man, Kit doesn't carry weapons on his person, but instead each shoot-out sequence starts with him disarming a crook with a few deft blows to acquire some gatts.

LEAD KISS OF JUSTICE

Shooting sequences play very much like *Time Crisis* – successful play hinges on popping out from behind cover and capping the bad guys in between their volleys of fire. Your foes will be packing a variety of firearms and to keep things fresh you even get psychotics with crowbars and suicide bombers charging at you.

In true action movie tradition, Kit's pieces come

"THE FINEST EXAMPLE OF APPLIED MOTION CAPTURE TO DATE"

occasionally leave behind planks and iron bars than can be welded to deal more pain to the bad guys.

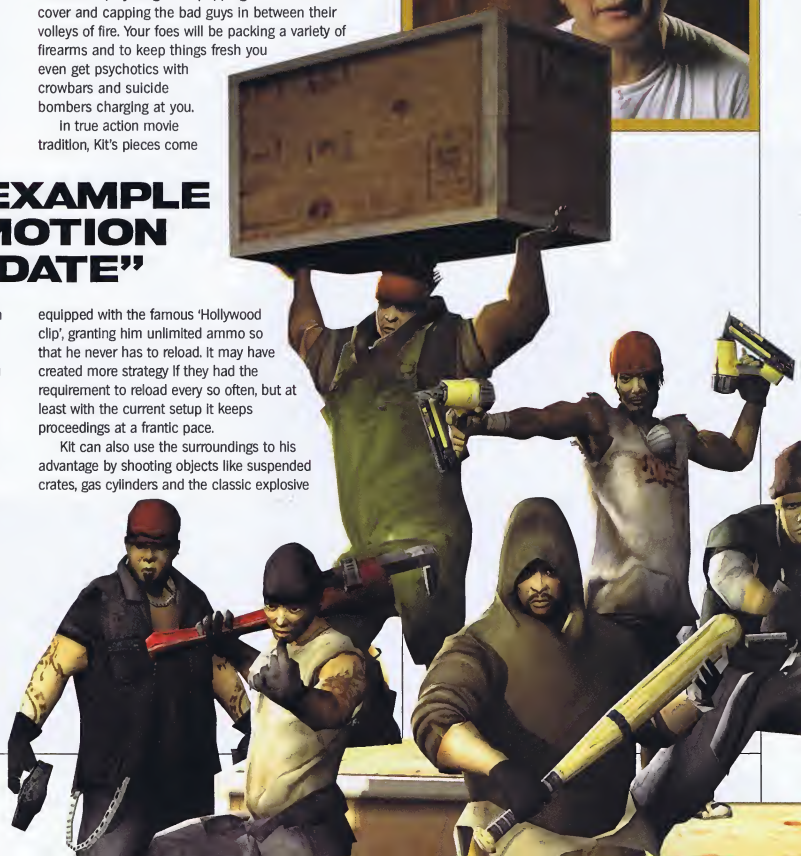
Even more fun is the way you can use throws with your surroundings. Position yourself accordingly and you can smack some goons directly into walls, plow them along nightclub bars or send them plummeting over railings. The pick of the bunch would have to be smashing the thugs headfirst through fishtanks, which shower the room with glass, water and some surprised fish to great dramatic effect.

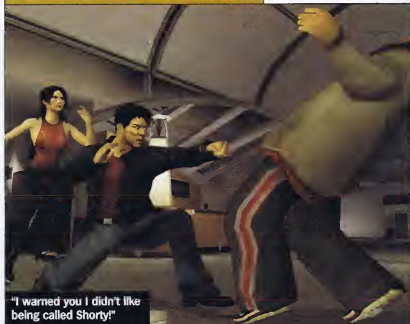
The Triad thugs that are out to get you come in all shapes and sizes including sassy karate chicks, skinny street punks and massive bald bruisers in suits. They all use a variety of martial arts, including capoeira, ju-jitsu and everyone's favourite, drunken boxing. Each different enemy type requires a different tactic to defeat, and facing large groups of mixed baddies can be quite challenging. Bosses in particular will require a bit of thought to determine their attack patterns and devise the best method to dispatch them.

On occasion, the Triad thugs think better of trying to match fists with Kit, and start pulling out the hardware. Sadly, they don't realise that special investigator Yun is

equipped with the famous 'Hollywood clip', granting him unlimited ammo so that he never has to reload. It may have created more strategy if they had the requirement to reload every so often, but at least with the current setup it keeps proceedings at a frantic pace.

Kit can also use the surroundings to his advantage by shooting objects like suspended crates, gas cylinders and the classic explosive





"YUN IS WELL VERSED IN DEALING OUT DOUBLE-FISTED 9MM JUSTICE"



barrels to spectacular effect, keeping the body count skyrocketing. Your adrenaline meter can also be used in gun battles for some "John Woo-style slow motion diving bullet love".

To link all the gunplay and fighting together, the game will shift into an action sequence. You might be chasing a Triad goon through twisting back alleys or running from a strafing helicopter atop an abandoned building site, or dodging a snipers on the docks, and you'll need to guide Kit through the ordeal unharmed.

While the action scenes generally involve moving in the appropriate direction and timed button presses, they are very simple from a control point of view. However, there is still a great degree of speed and accuracy required to get through. For what is, in essence, a modern day version of *Dragon's Lair*, *RTH*'s action scenes are a lot of fun and maintain the tension achieved in the rest of the game.

There are even a few stealth levels that involve sneaking around security guards and taking them out with silent knockout blows. Unfortunately, they don't keep with the white knuckle pace of the remainder of *RTH*, and every budding cinematographer knows that pacing is an important part of any film or game.

RELENTLESS IRON TIGER

The game's loading times are completely concealed by the cutscenes in a clever stroke of technical subterfuge. The downside of this is that you can't skip most cutscenes, which can get a bit trying if you're struggling to pass a particularly tricky section and have to sit through the same, albeit short sequence repeatedly. For an authentic touch, you can select to play through the Hong Kong sections

with Cantonese speech with subtitles, or if that's not to your tastes, just play with full English speech. Each scene that you complete can be easily accessed through a level select, complete with a short animated clip so you can easily tell between them, just like you get on deluxe edition DVDs.

Unfortunately, longevity is where *RTH* takes the biggest fall. The game provides you with around twelve hours of entertainment the first time through, and there are harder difficulty levels to tackle for the more hardcore players. Once you've finished the main game though (aside from going back to enjoy some of the cooler bits over again) there's not much at all to entice you back. The few unlockables that are on offer are pretty disappointing, and pale in comparison to the excellent 'making of' video that is available from the get-go. This 'behind the scenes' production contains intimate interviews with Jet Li and Corey Yuen, and they discuss the difference between making movies and making the game. With a lot of footage of the mo-cap process and some amusing bloopers, it makes for some compelling viewing.

DIVING PHOENIX CLAW

Provided you boot up *RTH* with the expectation of playing a kick-ass interactive action movie and not some epic game with unlimited replay value, you'll have an absolute blast. The fluid fighting mechanics gleaned from m-capping one of the world's greatest martial artists bodes very well for the future of the fighting genre, and the thrills and polish don't do *RTH* any disservice. **A** Nick O'Shea

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	Large interactive levels and excellent characters
Sound	08	Movie-style score with great voice and effects
Gameplay	07	Simple, yet intuitive butt-kicking
Life span	06	Not quite enough Kung Fu for your cash

This is as close as you can get to being Jet Li without spending a decade in a Shao Lin temple.

07

THE MAN, THE FIST, THE LEGEND

A martial arts movie veteran, Li has been wowing fight movie fans for over two decades with his blinding speed and refined technique. Trained since the age of nine in the Shao Lin fighting art of Wu Shu, Li won five national martial arts championships in his home country of China. This is no mean feat when you consider he was competing against a couple of billion people in the national sport. At only 5'6" Jet Li encapsulates the term "Pocket Rocket".





Covering fire



Note all the pommie hooligans wearing their team shirts

SOCCER SIM

THIS IS SOCCER 2004

Sony's latest "world game" offering has returned for another shot at glory

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: **SONY**
 DEVELOPER: **SONY EUROPE**
 PRICE: **\$99.95**
 PLAYERS: **1-8**
 OUT: **APRIL**
 WEBSITE: **HTTP://AU.SCEE.COM**
 60HZ MODE: **NO**
 WIDESCREEN: **YES**
 SURROUND SOUND: **NO**
 ONLINE: **YES**

BACK STORY

While their graphics have usually been a strength, all previous TIS titles have traditionally fallen slightly behind the Pro Evolution and FIFA games in terms of gameplay quality and sales.

Otaly vs Brazil, '94 World Cup Final. Roberto Baggio steps up to take a penalty. After 110 minutes of desperation soccer nobody could find the back of the net. It's down to the shootout and 60 million Italians are on Baggio's shoulders. He's gotta score to keep Italy alive.

Baggio moves in and strikes it. Oh no! He pumps the ball deep into the crowd. He's missed the mark by a very long way and sadly, there are similarities here with *This Is Soccer 2004*. The TIS games have always had the potential to be genuine superstars, but they always just miss the mark. Sony haven't missed by as much as Baggio did on that fateful day, but they've definitely lost in their bid to wrestle the Cup from *Pro Evolution Soccer 3*.

There is nothing inherently wrong with *TIS 2004*'s gameplay. It's actually very good. The ball movement is smooth and matches are played at a good pace. To really get the most out of a *TIS 2004* match, however, we do recommend playing eight-minute halves.

With some practise we were able to produce Manchester Utd-like build-ups to clever team goals by maintaining possession and working players into holes. If the finishing here isn't quite as clinical as the build-up, the game allows you to maintain pressure by regaining possession after saved shots, dodgy clearances and unsuccessful corners. FIFA Soccer games are awful in these situations – turnovers are always imminent.

Another big plus is that methods of goal scoring are almost endless. Once again, FIFA tends to be a little one-dimensional in this department. In a similar way to PES 3, you'll be hard-pressed to score a goal the same

way twice in *TIS 2004*. Not only that, there is some fine detail in recreating the sport's realism. When you sprint while in possession the ball is played well in front (as it should) meaning that slide tackles need to be precisely timed. Otherwise, expect attacking players to leave defenders behind easily with skill and bursts of pace.

Celebrations look fantastic with close-ups of the crowd. Even the coaches are shown celebrating magical finishes. This makes you feel that the passion of the game from all parties has been captured. It works well, with SCEE going to the extent of fitting the crowd with their team's gear as well as making sure all the coaches look like the real ones – England boss Sven Goran Eriksson is our favourite. Star players also have their trademark celebrations leaving the overall appearance of the players simply stunning. At times, we're willing to even describe them as unbelievably lifelike!

Replays are of a high standard, in-game score and stat updates look sensational, dead ball situations invite thought and creativity (although they're definitely not as good as in FIFA), and slide tackles look awesome, but be careful when tackling – attacking players with the ball now have the option of deliberately diving. It can help win penalties and free kicks, but more often than not you get caught out and earn yourself a yellow card.

Aside from the usual World Cups, Euro Cups, English Premier Leagues and so on, *TIS 2004* also has a great league involving classic teams. It is referred to as the 'Timewarp' cup and it involves all of the greatest teams in history. You can't play with all of them immediately, of course – you have to unlock them first.

BETTER THAN

THIS IS SOCCER 2003

WORSE THAN

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Soccer as a lifestyle. We feel the game has encapsulated the passion!

What they need to fix

More game options within Career mode – not just leagues!



Foul! Or was it a deliberate dive? It's up to the ref....





The player graphics vary in quality through the game

THE PINNACLE

Take your country to the top of the world through the exact format of the 2002 World Cup, though it'll have to change a little to make way for the Aussies ...



Although dead ball situations are not of as high a calibre as FIFA 2004 or Pro Evo 3, you can still score some crackers with the likes of Zidane.



On the ball players have a great repertoire of tricks, but be sure not to press the 'deliberate dive' button too often or you could end up in trouble with the referee.



Battle for the ball against the best players in the world on the world stage while your dedicated fans watch your every move. The pressure is intense.



Play with 'toilet' sound effects and laugh as the ball farts

If comedy as opposed to history is more your style, you can unlock toilet and fart sound effects instead of the classic teams for a bit of a laugh with your buddies. One more great aspect: you can play TIS 2004 online against gamers from around the world.

Now enough with the positives, the negatives must be addressed. Depending on your tastes, the Career mode is either challenging or a pain in the rear. For OPS2 it hurts. The reason being that you have to start with a school team and work your way up. The season is long and you can't play short halves because goals aren't easy to come by. Nobody has that much time to spare, do they? The transfer market and team management are comprehensive, and you want to build your team up – just not from scratch. You can always make matches play themselves, but this is not LMA Manager and you want to get out there and score some goals.

If TIS 2004 gave you the option of building up a team from Division 2 in England, or anywhere else in the world for that matter, rather than meandering around with a pack of schoolboys for an entire gruelling season, then it would be bearable – but only then.

It's disappointing because playing is a lot of fun, scoring and winning gives a real thrill, but it truly is entertaining. At times sports-sims are tedious against computer generated teams because the artificial intelligence is not so smart, but that's not the case here.

On disappointments, let us talk about the stadiums.

This is a minor detail to some but crucial to others who've dreamed of playing at Old Trafford, The Stade De France, or good old Telstra Stadium. Instead we have to settle for Arnold Schwarzenegger Stadium – yes, seriously! This is obviously due to licensing difficulties, but Arnie, please mate, do not come back next year.

One more thing. While the graphics are sensational when players take to the field, goals are scored, and fouls are committed, the in-game graphics are not quite as spectacular. Players run like Sideshow Bob, and the camera angles are limited to say the least.

A bit more attention to detail on facets like cutting down the load time, more options in the career mode, a more creative dead ball option and real stadiums would have seen TIS 2004 battle for top honours against Pro Evo 3 and FIFA 2004, but unfortunately they've bowed out of the Cup again. **A** Cameron Tomarchio

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	Players are very detailed
Sound	07	Entertaining and varied commentary
Gameplay	08	Smooth, good pace, lots of ways to score
Life span	06	Career mode is a tad disappointing

The pros outweigh the cons but the cons are annoying. TIS is not as good as Pro Evo 3, but it's slowly closing in.





Despite appearances, Harry doesn't have a big ego

PLATFORM

PITFALL! THE LOST EXPEDITION

Crikey, mate! Watch out for those crocodiles and we're not talking about Frogger

X DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: EDGE OF REALITY
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.EDGEOFREALITY.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: YES
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

X BACK STORY

Activision's original Pitfall title was released back in 1982. It was an early platform game programmed by virtuoso David Crane of Decathlon fame. It was so popular it occupied the top sales position for 64 weeks. This updated Pitfall was programmed by the team at Edge of Reality, and is their first PlayStation 2 game.

Sure, its humour is camper than a Boy George look-a-like competition, but Activision's new Pitfall game is not half bad. For the unlucky souls who were born after the '80s (the golden era of all things nerdy, now celebrated under the banner of "retro"), Pitfall was an adventure game on the pioneering Atari 2600.

You guide an Indiana Jones-type fellow through jungle terrain, swinging on vines and using crocodiles as stepping stones to cross rivers. That fellow was a man named Harry, Pitfall Harry. Fast forward a couple of decades into the future and we have the inevitable PS2 cash-in – and why not?

It's easiest to think of Pitfall: The Lost Expedition as a 3D platforming title, similar to Rayman and other gap-crossing-obsessed titles, but that would mean ignoring the rather large adventure element woven into the game. There'll be more on that in a moment.

For now, however, just know that along with the 3D facelift, Pitfall: The Lost Expedition has its own cheeky charm that resonates off the screen as big-headed Harry prances through jungle terrain, double-jumping gorges, dispatching nasties and doing all manners of heroic deeds. Harry happens to be a nice fellow too...

The Lost Expedition's playful aesthetic covers all the game's elements including visuals, music, animation and even character dialogue. The theme for everything is 'fun, fun, fun'. Firstly, all the characters are

designed with disproportionately large heads and tiny bodies, making them look about as gritty and menacing as Mr. Potato Head. Secondly, the animation is quite hilarious. Harry looks like an amphetamine user as he frantically swims from sharks, while he looks more like a power-walking Grandma in fast forward as he performs his Heroic Dash over obstacles. This lighthearted feel resonates throughout the entire game.

INDIANA JONES-STYLE

Harry narrates the story in the past tense as he recounts a plane crash that led him, along with a bunch of other explorers, to be lost in the middle of a dense and dangerous jungle wilderness. The aim of the game, therefore, is to move through the many levels located within the four main areas on the map, save as many other explorers as you can and thwart the plans of the dastardly St Claire – an opposing archaeological scumbag out to find and loot the lost city of El Dorado!

After playing the game for a reasonable period of time, you'll notice two things. The presentation is very impressive; not that it'll jump out and deliver you a Stoooge-like poke to the eyeballs; but developer Edge of Reality has nailed the small details. The frame rate is consistent, the textures are vibrant without looking sickeningly out of place and the draw distance for some levels requires no fog whatsoever.

Load times between levels are also reasonable.

GIVE HARRY A HAND

One of the welcome and unusual gameplay elements in Pitfall is the ability to control Harry's right arm with the right analog stick. When you equip an item, like the gas mask, you have to press up on the stick for Harry to hold it up to his face. Likewise when activating a lever, you must press up on the stick to grab it, then to the side to force it in the desired direction. It's zany, but cool. The Dual Shock has had a history of using both sticks. Apart from racers, it also dates back to games like Ape Escape and there are set to be a lot more. You better start getting used to it!



BETTER THAN

RAYMAN 3

WORSE THAN

RATCHET AND CLANK 2

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The presentation is absolutely top notch. Other developers take note.

What they need to fix

It needs more activity and things to do in the levels – they're too empty.



The game's mechanics are nothing short of brilliant

What's more, the camera – bane of so many games of this style – works stubbornly well. Voice acting is intentionally cheesy, and is (apart from the annoying jaguar) entertaining. Hearing walking hard-on Harry try to bust the moves on every female he meets in the game should at least milk a moment of laughter. All in all, it looks, feels and sounds great.

But the second thing that jumps out at you may not prove so endearing. Unlike most platformers that feature anywhere from 12 to 15 game worlds packed to the gills with obstacles, enemies, secrets and treasure, *Pitfall's* 40-plus levels are humbler affairs. It's not quite that it's a case of quantity over quality though. The game is trying

way to make sure you don't smash your controller – but perhaps too much so.

Not only is health abundant thanks to your life-restoring canteen, but if you plummet to your doom then you restart from the safety of the platform you leapt from, the only penalty being a single nugget of health. This isn't actually such a bad idea as it keeps you in a good mood, but it also means you'll scream through the game in under ten hours.

Just in case you have trouble, and you should be concerned if you do, you can buy upgrades off dozing Shaman. These include new moves like the breakdancing attack, which sees you spin on your head

“PLUMMET TO YOUR DOOM AND YOU RESTART FROM THE PLATFORM YOU LEAPT FROM”

to re-create the adventure feel by having the levels laid out on connecting game paths. To get to a specific place you'll often have to pass through several levels on your way there. Obviously, for this idea to work, the levels then have to be shorter. You don't want to get bogged down with some overly difficult platforming activity just because you're backtracking.

The decision to structure the game like this is a big one. As mentioned, it means there's not all that much to do in each level and there's a definite lack of interesting discoveries because of it. The desire to explore just isn't here, mainly because there's very little hidden – bar one or two idol statues and even fewer lost explorers. The game feels like a connected hub world lacking proper levels of substance and activity. There's a lot of virtual space here dedicated to relatively little gameplay.

Secondly, by having the levels joining up in such a way and in keeping with the theme of fun, the game is really challenging. If you're bolting through a level in order to get back to another destination, you don't want to have to perform unbelievable exploits of mind-boggling skill. No, you want to get through the level as fast as possible. The game knows this and goes a long

and use your feet to boot nearby foes, or the mid-air butt stomp that attacks enemies from above. You can also buy health increases [these become more expensive as you go] and maps that reveal how many explorers and idol statues are located in each level.

This edition includes both the original Atari 2600 *Pitfall* game as well as the sequel. They're tucked away in the game somewhere waiting to be found by adventurous players.

Pitfall: TLE is a decent romp, bursting with character and humour but the bizarre decision to lay the levels need to be better implemented. **A** James Ellis

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	05	Not an ugly area in sight
Sound	09	Impressive score and entertainingly cheesy voices
Gameplay	07	Fun for a while, but most of the levels are too short
Life span	05	You'll knock this over quickly, making it a good rental

It's not going to dethrone any of the current champions in the genre, but it's good chilled-out fun for a while.

07



There are some hilarious moments found throughout

CROC-HOPPING MAD

When navigating the untamed jungle, Harry has to stretch his available resources. Check out Harry's how-to course on using crocs as stepping stones.



HOW IT'S DONE

Precision, grace and pace are key. Confidently spring on the desired crocodile, and immediately springing off to the next platform.



WHAT NOT TO DO

Do not dawdle or fall in the drink. If this occurs you may find yourself in the jaws of the croc, your life flashing before your eyes!



DON'T PANIC!

If you find yourself in this undesirable predicament – fear not. Use your body to pry open the creature's jaws and spring away to safety.



Put your hands up if you can't stand Rove Live

RACING SIM

MTX: MOTOTRAX

Motocross that will leave your clothes cleaner than Napi-san

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: LEFT FIELD
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-8
OUT: APRIL
WEBSITE:
WWW.MTXMOTOTRAX.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Left Field Productions has come out of... er... left field after producing some quality N64 sports titles like *Excite Bike 64* and *Kobe Bryant Courtside*. MTX is its first PS2 title.

Most of us have oohed and ahhed at the air motocross riders get, and if you haven't then you don't know what you've missed. Who wouldn't like men on little dirtbikes getting more air than Michael Jordan on a trampoline while pulling off tricks like a breakdancer, then landing so hard that it looks as though they must have squished their testicles like grapes?

There's never really been a motocross title that's captured what it's like to be one of these crusty demons until now, and it's no surprise that the king of extreme sports titles, Activision, is behind it.

MTX's main game appears to have borrowed elements from the Yoda of extreme titles, Tony Hawk's *Skateboarding* and implemented a detailed Career mode. Here, you can build your own motocross superstar from scratch and take him from being a dirty punk with training wheels to a motocross legend. Once you've got your character looking as good as you, you'll start receiving emails – minus spam, thankfully! These emails inform you about race events, sponsors and everything else that affects your career. This is a little like the Career mode in *V8 Supercars Race Driver*.

There is nothing linear about MTX and it totally feels like a choose-your-own-adventure story where you decide what you want to do and when you want to do it.

You can jump head-first into a racing event, or duck out and visit your mate, Travis Pastrana, to learn some new tricks and complete tasks – the choice is yours. Activision has implemented the task system superbly to suit the Career mode. The tasks are not just there to complete so you can unlock the next level – they're there so you can continue to build your skills, impress sponsors so you can ultimately advance in your career and earn some money. Because, as you can guess, a real motocross racer wouldn't pick up a million-dollar contract just because he or she did five laps around a bus while doing a wheelie.

Sponsors play a big part in MTX. Keeping you clothed is only the beginning. Once you've signed a contract with a sponsor you can purchase new threads and ditch the jumpsuit your mum lent you. Don't expect any dodgy gear either as most of the big real-life motocross manufacturers (sunglasses behemoths Oakley are just one) have supplied their stuff to MTX.

While your story is told entirely through emails, the Career mode seems to cover anything and everything a real motocross racer would have to go endure in order to reach the big time. Throughout this experience, you do get the feeling that you're a true battler trying to climb up the professional mountain.

Anyone who can play a PS2 will be able to pick up

BETTER THAN
MX UNLEASHED
WORSE THAN
MOTO GP 3

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Career mode: Captured every struggle a real rider would face

What they need to fix

The lack of modes gets annoying and detracts from the re-playability



Getting to the shops is always an ordeal in Tasmania





"BUILD THE HILLS AS HIGH AS YOU WANT, MAKE THE TURNS AS SHARP AS POSSIBLE..."

and play *MTX* due to its simple and logical control system. If you've played any of Activision extreme sports title then you'll be pulling off Scorpions and Nac Nacs like a pro in next to no time. However, if this is your first time then there is the option to switch on the on-screen help, which will guide you through everything from using the bike's clutch to grab more air, to taking a corner without grazing your knee.

The only complaint we have is that while motocross is about gnarly tricks, it's also about speed and in *MTX*, we don't feel as though we're racing as fast as we'd like to. When compared to other racing titles like *Need for Speed Underground*, *Burnout 3* and even *Moto GP*, where the sense of speed is so convincing that we can almost feel the G-forces, *MTX* is decidedly second rate. While they've captured the amazing tricks of motocross, *MTX* fails to grasp this sense of speed.

The multiplayer modes are also a little less satisfying than other extreme titles already out there. There are only two modes available – Single Race and Series Event (which is just a bunch of single races anyway).

While the inclusion of online network gaming is a great feature, there's nothing particularly amazing worth revving about here. Fortunately though, Activision have added one of our favourite modes – the create-a-track feature. Build the hills as high as you want, make the turns as sharp as possible and add as many whoops as you want. [By the way, a whoops is not what your next-door neighbour's dog leaves on your lawn, it's a series of little speed bumps that leave you feeling like you're on a bucking bronco.] This feature covers everything and more, and once your ultimate track is complete you and a mate can tear it to shreds.

On one hand *MTX Mototrax* is an easy pick-up-and-play game that anyone can be enjoying in matter of minutes. There's the fantastic track editor that lets you transform a pile of dirt into a motocross palace and

there's a satisfying Career mode that gives you the feeling you're working your ass off to get to the top even though in reality you're making diddly squat. On the other hand, the sense of speed is as non-existent as a song worth listening to on an Enrique Iglesias album and the multiplayer mode is barely worth wiping the dirt off.

The positive features still far outweigh the areas that are lacking though, so if you're a motocross fan, an adrenaline junkie or simply love rolling around in dirt then *MTX* is definitely one worth grabbing. This one's clearly headed down the right track. **A** Paul Frew

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	07	Dirt effects could have been cleaner
Sound	08	Tunes from Jet, Slipknot and The Stooges
Gameplay	08	Freaking fantastic, simple and easy to use
Life span	08	The freedom will have you coming back for more

Despite a few disappointing features, *MTX Mototrax* is worth wearing some fluorescent leathers for.

08

HOLY SHOT

There are plenty of ways to score extra cash in *MTX* but the simplest way is the Holeshot. The person to make it past the gate area first not only takes the lead but can also find themselves rolling around in the green. You can't hold down the **+** button before the buzzer goes off like in other racing titles so it's completely based on your reaction time. Press it at the right time and you'll have the chicks cleaning you off after the race. Miss your opportunity and you'll get a faceful of mud. We'll be going for option one, thanks very much.





RACING SIM

MX UNLEASHED

Standard motocross racers are no longer enough – Unleashed ups the ante

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: RAINBOW STUDIOS
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.THQ.COM.AU
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Now widely regarded as the masters of off-road racing games, Rainbow Studios has continued to affirm its dominance in this niche with MX Unleashed – an updated version of Motocross Madness 2.

The 'new and improved' version of sports sims don't always live up to expectation. The slight, yet hardly ground-breaking variations on FIFA Soccer and more recently, AFL Live, are fine examples. Some offending companies are producing games with slightly altered gameplay with Improved graphics, while introducing a token new feature – but not really advancing things much at all. In terms of moto racers however, MX Unleashed has finally pushed the boundaries.

THQ's newest moto game is solid. From the makers of the popular ATV Offroad Fury games, and the not-so-popular Splashdown series, Rainbow Studios' newest venture, MX Unleashed, has set a new precedent in moto-gaming. Why? It's mainly due to the excellent balance they've found between arcade and simulation.

The gameplay caters for most gamers in that it is simple enough for the untrained motocross brain to pick up a Dual Shock 2 and excel, while also offering advanced skills for experienced moto-gamers. The game allows you to lean forward and back on your bike for improved handling through the whoops, use the clutch for maximum acceleration off the line and to improve your handling through corners.

Tricks and crashes are more spectacular while simultaneously being more realistic. Opponents are smarter and require some beating – there are plenty of reasons why MX Unleashed is impressive. Above all, the best part of the game is its Freestyle mode.

It's here where one's driving skills are pushed to the limit, and not only on a motorbike! There's also a

monster truck, dune-buggy, trophy truck, bi-plane and a helicopter to play with. This sensational addition allows you to drive these machines if you beat them in a duel, or earn enough points in other modes to buy one.

The Freestyle mode offers a number of other mini-games. These basically involve hitting and landing jumps in specified areas before the other Pros do. It's fun and tests the skills, but nothing compares to racing helicopters and grabbing some massive air alongside monster trucks over the rugged terrain.

Motocross games over the years have failed in one essential aspect of a successful sports sim: addictiveness. Until now they haven't offered a lot of diversity – they become repetitive and it isn't too long before we're bored. The Freestyle mode single-handedly rectifies that problem here – once you're tired of racing motos against motos, you race in and against extreme machines. That's hours of entertainment right there.

It's less serious than MTX: Mototrax, but for some that'll be its main selling point. **A** Cameron Tomarchio

MOTO-MADNESS... TO THE EXTREME

Reckless massive air amongst the mountains, over the spinning propeller of an aggressive chopper or around the sheer mass of a monster truck. When it comes to racing in MX Unleashed there's no consideration for safety or survival – you've just got to focus on landing that no-hander and getting to the finish line before all else.



OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	07	Not especially stunning, but smooth
Sound	07	Punk rock and occasionally harder – suitable
Gameplay	08	Dynamic. Requires substantial skill
Life span	08	Extensive career and freestyle modes

A must for petrol-heads. Motocross games are heading in the right kind of direction with MX Unleashed.



BETTER THAN

RICKY CARMICHAEL MOTOCROSS

WORSE THAN

MTX: MOTOTRAX

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The extreme machine races available in Freestyle mode

What they need to fix

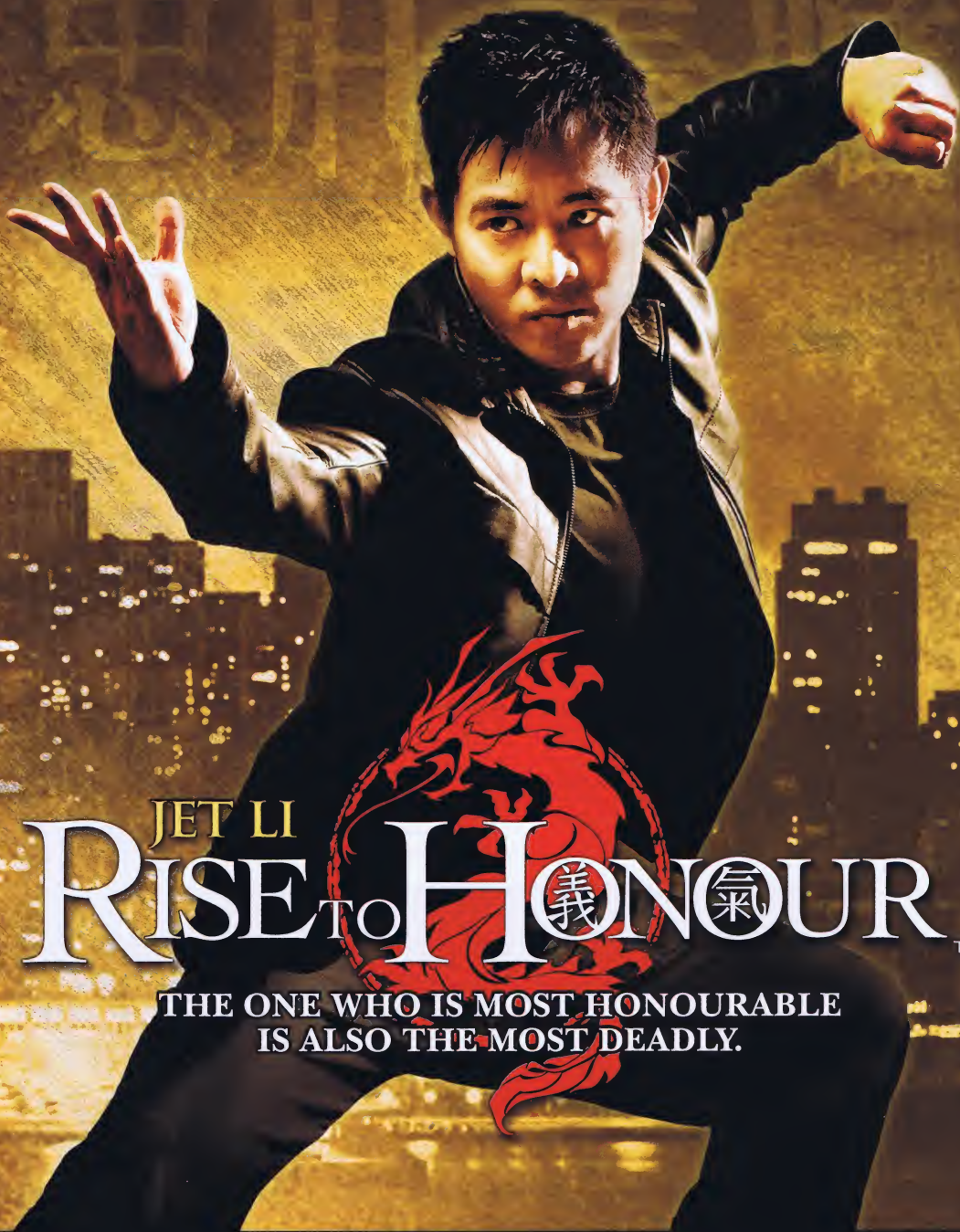
We'd like to see four-player gaming like in ATV Offroad Fury



Shift your weight through the whoops for top speeds



Master those banked turns by using the clutch



JET LI
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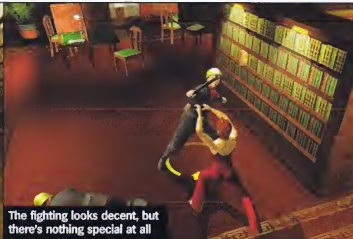
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PlayStation®2

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The fighting looks decent, but there's nothing special at all



Stick with Solid Snake: even if you're mad for Jen

ADVENTURE

ALIAS

OPS2 finally gets to the nitty gritty of Jennifer Garner

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ACCLAIM
DEVELOPER: ACCLAIM
CHELTENHAM
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.ALIASGAME.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Jennifer Garner has been swooning around as the secret agent in the hit TV show *Alias* for several seasons now. Touchstone has signed up her own video game publisher Acclaim to bring the experience to the PS2.



spin-off from the TV show, *Alias* follows the missions of CIA agent Sydney Bristow and her efforts to foil the insidious plans of the mysterious SD6 organisation. Sydney's missions generally involve infiltrating the enemy's HQ for purposes of recovering key technology and information. To get in and out in one piece, our amorous agent has to use her skills of disguise, stealth and, if need be, both armed and unarmed combat.

Once Sydney gets in deep she needs to remain completely out of sight. You have three movement modes to toggle between (standard, stealth and crouching) to move quickly and quietly. If you sneak up on an enemy undetected, Syd can put them out of commission without the slightest noise. The downside to this stealth gameplay is that getting spotted by a patrol or a security camera has little to no consequences.

Setting off an alarm usually only brings a couple of extra guards that are easily dispatched. Rather than being rewarded for performing well, or providing a variety of methods of play, you can go through any way you want and get the same basic experience.

Due to the fact that night vision goggles will smear your mascara, Sydney uses nanotech contact lenses to provide her with enhanced vision. The main mode you'll be using is an enhanced low-light vision that not only allows you to see in the dark, but also identifies nearby threats – even through walls. With this mode almost overly useful and without drawback, you find yourself using it all the time, and spend most of the game watching the proceedings through a green filter. The

thermographic vision on the other hand, is pointless.

If Sydney breaks her cover, she can bust 'em up with a variety of martial arts kicks, strikes and throws. To inflict extra pain on the SD6 henchmen, Syd can grab almost any object to wrap around their noggins. Sadly, despite some technical merit, battles usually degrade into frantic button mashing.

One of the novel features that *Alias* brings to the stealth genre is its use of split-screen camera views. To add to the drama, views from security cameras or approaching henchmen will shift onto the screen. While it's an interesting addition, the fact that it obscures a large area of your own view makes it more irritating than beneficial. Though Acclaim managed to get the stars of the show to voice the numerous outscenes, it's just too little, too late in the end.

Alias isn't quite complete crap, but against the likes of *Splinter Cell* and *Metal Gear Solid 2*, it may as well be. If you're after some *Alias*, get the real thing and buy the DVD box set. **A** Nick O'Shea

OPERATION OBVIOUS

The first mission, titled 'Operation Casino' starts with Jen posing as a cocktail waitress in a Monte Carlo casino to snoopdrop on a top secret SD6 meeting. The next mission, set in a museum in Saudi Arabia is titled, funnily enough, 'Operation Museum'. Rocket science at its very best.



OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **07** Some nice touches, but pretty average on the whole
Sound **06** Run-of-the-mill but saved by authentic voice actors
Gameplay **05** Jack of all trades, master of none
Life span **04** Good luck with sitting through it all

Unlike Jen's kung fu fightin' skills, this game proves to be little more than average. Even fans will struggle with it!

05

BETTER THAN

A POKE IN THE EYE

WORSE THAN

SPLINTER CELL

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The fit look of Jen's body, but not much else!

What they need to fix

Terrible AI, poor combat controls, clunky camera, fuzzy textures...



This outfit is one of the few highlights. How sad!



Oncoming guards are too easily dispatched



THE 2004 ANNUAL

Mixed by Mark Dynamix and John Course

Featuring

Benny Benassi

Groove Armada

Ferry Corsten

Linus Loves

Cam Farrar

Rogue Traders

Planet Funk

Bad Cabbage

The Supermen Lovers

Room 5

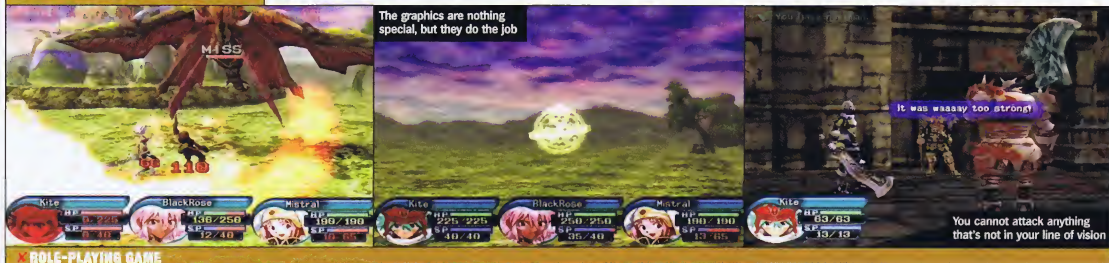
Lee Cabrera

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.hack-VOL 1: INFECTION

The contagion is spreading... now PlayStation 2 is infected!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
DEVELOPER: CYBER CONNECT 2
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.DOTHACK.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

An RPG, *hack - Volume 1: Infection* is part of a larger narrative that spans gaming and anime movies. Each aspect of the hack project tells a different part of the story, the core of which is a computer virus, and an online game called *The World*.

Trying to mess with the traditional RPG formula is a move that usually ends in tears. *hack - Volume 1: Infection* is a pretty neat exception to this generalisation.

The basic premise is so simple, and so exceptional. You play a character who is playing a character in an online game, in the style of *EverQuest* or *Ultima Online*. While most of the game's action takes place in the online world of the game called - funnily enough - *The World*, you will have to also access email, news bulletins, and *The World* forums. You can even customise the desktop of your "computer". And while you spend most of your time as *World* character Kite, the main character is not Kite - it is the 14-year-old Japanese boy who controls Kite in *The World*.

Confused? Get this: this duality is well established in the beginning of the game. You (unnamed boy) join the online community of *The World* at the request of your friend Yasuhiko, who calls himself Orca in *The World*, and draws a very strong line between reality and the game.

However, this line is blurred when Orca is attacked in *The World* by a virus in the shape of a monster, leaving Yasuhiko in a coma. During this, Kite is left with powers that allow him to defeat the virus - the only tool he has for finding out what has happened to his friend.

The gameplay is surprisingly close to what you would expect from an online game. While there is a concrete storyline and scripted missions, you can still run around doing things that you would normally do in a MMORPG - battle monsters, explore areas, level up, collect weapons and form a party. However, these activities are strictly confined. For example, you can only form a party with selected non-player characters (NPCs), and interaction with other NPCs is limited to a few phrases and item trading. However, area exploration is quite vast and open, with lists of keywords to combine into different portals. Some of these you have to go to as part of the story, but you can create any number of areas just for the fun of it.

The battle system is tightly controlled by you. By default, your party will melee, but any other actions - magic, or healing - require you to make commands to your party members by accessing a menu. The other thing is, you cannot attack, and your party members cannot use magic on, any enemy that isn't in your line of vision. So if it ain't on your screen, you can't hit it. You might think that this would make battles all the more difficult, but with smooth camera controls and intuitive commands, controlling three characters is a breeze.

As far as role-playing games go, *hack - Volume 1: Infection* is a little short, as it can be finished in about 20 hours. But don't despair - it is only the first part in a four-part series! **A** Michelle Starr



ACTION DU JOUR

With practically every action requiring access to a menu, one would think that playing the game would become quite cumbersome - but the menu interface couldn't be more responsive. There's none of this dying malarkey while waiting for the menu to pop up, or having to press six hundred buttons to get where you need to be. Better still, if you die, you can still give commands to your party members to resurrect you - but only if they have the right items, so make sure you stock them up before leaving town.



BETTER THAN

KINGDOM HEARTS

WORSE THAN

FINAL FANTASY X-2

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The interaction between the "real" world and *The World*, and the interface

What they need to fix

The recovery time after using magic is a little slow...

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	Not the pinnacle of graphics, but appropriate
Sound	08	Fantastic voice acting for the most part
Gameplay	09	Simple but addictive
Life span	08	The number of dungeons is almost infinite - and fun!

An addictive new spin on the RPG that takes the genre's possibilities to new levels.





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the Forbidden Siren is calling... www.forbidden-siren.com

fun, anyone?
PlayStation 2



SURVIVAL-HORROR

FORBIDDEN SIREN

BRONZE
 PlayStation 2
EXCLUSIVE RELEASE

Bringing horror back from the dead

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
 DEVELOPER: SONY
 PRICE: \$99.95
 PLAYERS: 1
 OUT: MARCH
 WEBSITE: WWW.FORBIDDEN SIREN.COM
 60HZ MODE: NO
 WIDESCREEN: NO
 SURROUND SOUND: YES
 ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Forbidden Siren is the latest of the new generation of horror games, closer to Project Zero than Resident Evil – zombies notwithstanding. Based on H.P. Lovecraft and Japanese horror comics, it contains the scary elements of both, and a few extras that director Kelichiro Toyama threw in!

It's time to crank up the volume and dim the lights – you are well on your way to one of the creepiest gaming experiences of all time.

In a departure from the traditional gaming experience of one character/one storyline, *Forbidden Siren* takes you through a maze of 78 episodes and a total of 10 characters whose stories you will have to play through in seemingly random order. In any game, this would be a unique experience. In *Forbidden Siren*, trying to figure out the connections between the characters and piecing together the story while trying to stay alive, it is nothing short of revolutionary.

And your main objective is to stay alive. Combat is clumsy and, at best, a tactic to merely slow down the enemies who lay in wait all over the village of Hanyuda. If a character dies, then some of the story will be lost, making the mystery of Hanyuda that little bit more difficult to unravel...

You might think it would be difficult, stumbling around trying to avoid monsters that you can't see – but that is where the other ingenious gameplay feature of *Forbidden Siren* comes into play. The zombified inhabitants of Hanyuda have the unique ability to see through each others' eyes. After spending time in the town, the playable characters also obtain this ability. By holding down the L2 button and flicking the left analog stick, you can scroll through the vision of everyone in your immediate vicinity, including humans.

You cannot see the monsters – but you can see yourself through their eyes. Some missions also require you to partner other survivors, and you can flick to their point of view – a move that has interesting side effects when you pair up with a blind girl wandering around the desolate village. But does the acquisition of this ability mean that you, too, are turning into a zombie?

This 'sightjacking', however, sometimes detracts a little from the tension of the game. Being able to see, more or less, what is after you, and where it is, makes for a more strategic experience. You are not trying to run from the monsters – you are trying to keep them from even seeing you in the first place!

Siren's major downfall is the British voice-overs. In a game that is supposed to be full of suspense, it's a little off-putting to hear harsh accents coming from the obviously Japanese characters. But there is a solution – switch the audio to Japanese, and stick to the subtitles.

There's no real reprieve from the mental involvement, or the game's intensity. So hang on, and hope that the puddle on your seat is only sweat. **A** Michelle Starr

BETTER THAN

CLOCKTOWER 3
 WORSE THAN
 PROJECT ZERO

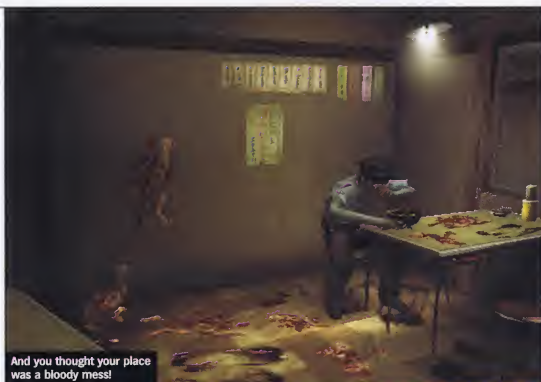
LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The website and the concept – it doesn't get more unique than this

What they need to fix

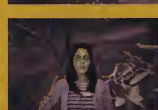
The British voice-overs make it seem more comical than tense



DON'T ADJUST YOUR TV SET



When you start sightjacking, you'll get a screen of static in between zombies – and when you get to a zombie, the screen will look all distorted and unstable. The strangest bit, though, is that in "zombie-vision", everyone shows up with a big cross of light over their heads. And when you sightjack a blind girl,



OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **DE** Dark. Brooding. The realism just makes it creepier
Sound **DE** Stick to the Japanese track and you'll be happier!
Gameplay **DE** Cutting-edge. It doesn't get much better
Life span **DE** There's a lot to do, but maybe not more than once

This game belongs on the shelf of every survival-horror buff. Hell – it just belongs on the shelf of every gamer!





Camera angles change often, adding to the game's urgency



Plenty of character detail – even on that green blob thing

ACTION

NIGHTSHADE

Reach for the smokebombs and shuriken, Shinobi has returned!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
DEVELOPER: SEGA
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.SEGA.COM
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Shinobi originally followed the exploits of the master Ninja, Joe Musashi through the 8- and 16-bit eras. Last year, Sega breathed new life into the legend, bringing Shinobi to the PS2 with frantic flair. *Nightshade* is the direct sequel, this time charting the missions of a beautiful female Ninja.

Several years have passed since the Golden Palace Incident in Tokyo. All manner of precautions have been in place to prevent the hellspawn from breaking into this world again. For unknown reasons, a rogue corporation is pouring its vast resources into reviving the dimensional rift. At the first sign of danger, the Japanese government calls on the top secret Shinobi Organisation. Their prodigious new operative Hibana was clearly the woman for the mission, with her ninja skills matched only by her striking beauty.

In terms of armaments, Hibana carries both a sharp katana and a pair of short swords for a variety of ways to slice and dice her foes. As a secondary weapon, she can hurl throwing knives either individually at vital points to cause temporary paralysis, or fan out eight knives at a time as a defensive technique. Ninja magic also returns in three different varieties: Fire, Lightning and Wind.

Hibana's ninja training gives her superhuman powers to deal with the hellspawn threat. Aside from her deft foot speed and agility, she has a double-jump and the mysterious ability to run along sheer surfaces. Her kick attacks are a new technique, and they allow you to repel some projectile attacks, interrupt your foe's defences, and even loft them into the air.

Unlike other games that slow down the action to give the player an edge, *Nightshade* just speeds up the heroine to provide a thumb-blisteringly intense experience. Hibana can dash with lightning speed for surprise attacks. Her movements are so quick, she even leaves phantom images in her wake!

Nightshade's main characters, like Hibana and the bosses are wonderfully rendered, and there are some nice effects that add to the presentation and style, such as the laser-like trails that follow Hibana's distinctive headgear. On the other hand, most of the enemies and environments have fairly low polygon counts with little detail. Still, the simplicity allows for a host of enemies hurtling around the screen at 60 frames a second.

With often rapid camera angle changes during the action, it's fairly easy to get disoriented and end up plummeting off a fatal drop, or occasionally being surrounded by enemies and torn to pieces. This wouldn't be so bad if it wasn't for the distinct lack of mid-level restart points. One slight lapse in concentration can lead to throwing away 15 minutes of flawless play. No wonder ninjas meditate so often.

Beside some minor changes, *Nightshade* is very much like its prequel – a fast paced Ninja-fest, full of challenge and carnage. This one can be frustrating at times so beware of flying Dual Shocks. **A** Nick O'Shea

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **07** Simple yet colourful and sleek
Sound **08** Steel on steel backed by pumping techno
Gameplay **07** Acrobatic battle at blistering speeds
Life span **07** Thirteen levels, several play modes and rankings

Another hard and fast dose of ninja action. It's perfect for anyone who's followed *Shinobi* from way back when.

07



DECAPA-TATE

After a while, you'll be able to harness Hibana's shadowy skills and execute the classic 'tate' attacks we've all seen in old Ninja flicks. Hell enough foes in time, and you'll be treated to a brief cut-scene of the ninja girl busting a stylish pose while her enemies fall apart in a synchronised shower of gore.



"Come over here boys and give your auntie a cuddle."

BETTER THAN

ONI

WORSE THAN

DEVIL MAY CRY

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The ninja action is nice and frantic. Yup, it's just the way it should be!

What they need to fix

More restart points on levels would have made it far less frustrating.



We'd welcome a few more changes to gameplay



ROLE-PLAYING GAME

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II

Is the new D&D addition a sequel or an expansion pack?

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: VIVENDI
DEVELOPER: BLACK ISLE STUDIOS
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.BGDA2.BLACKISLE.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Black Isle Studios has taken the reins of the latest Baldur's Gate adventure. The developer has produced some quality RPGs including Lionheart: Legacy of the Crusader and the leaded series on PC.

After a three year wait, *Dungeons & Dragons* fans can finally grab their cloaks and celebrate like 'twas 1399. The latest *Baldur's Gate* adventure has arrived. The RPG has you running through a ruined dwarf city beneath the Earth, a labyrinth, an abomination-filled manor of an insane alchemist and includes five new faces. But while this all sounds like a new experience, after spending five minutes with *Baldur's Gate II* you'll find that little has changed.

As just mentioned, there are five new characters to choose from. The sinister Morduc has captured Adrianna, Vahn and Kromlech and has taken these guys out of the picture so he can use the Onyx Tower to destroy Baldur's Gate. So now it's up to Dorn Redbear, Vhaldra Uoswirl, Ysuran Avondril, Alessia Faithhammer and Borador Goldhand to stop this travesty from taking place. All five characters have their own strengths, weaknesses and fighting styles. For ours, the pick of the bunch is Ysuran the elven necromancer. He can cast fire arrows, acid arrows and spells, but his best party trick has to be his ability to bring a skeleton to life and have it kick everyone's asses!

On the topic of combat, for a hack 'n' slash title, *Baldur's Gate's* combat system is pretty weak. The system has changed little and while every player's opinion will differ as to whether this is a good thing or not, we think the system feels as old as the *Dungeons & Dragons* name. The aiming system is very difficult to use and it's almost impossible to lock on to enemies before they're in your face. Often the best attack is to mash **X** for close-range attacks and **C** for long-range attacks.

The RPG system is also unchanged, but we think this is actually a good thing. The original game has one of the simplest and easiest-to-use systems available. Power-ups are found while your player is searching for

treasure. When one is found, all you have to do is go to the menu and select which ability you would like to improve and that's it. There's no sphere-grid or allocation of points earned – it's all done in a matter of seconds so you can get back to slaying opponents.

Anyone looking for a new and improved *Baldur's Gate* adventure will not find it here. Sure, you'll be travelling through new areas and exploring new territories but in the end you still feel like you're playing a game that you finished 100 times three years ago.

If you're an RPG fan after something fresh then you should grab your staff and look elsewhere. Original fans who are keen to explore more of the *Baldur's Gate* will certainly get an adventure out of it though. **A** Paul Frew

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	As smooth as a dragon's behind
Sound	09	Great voice-acting and atmospheric score
Gameplay	05	It was great three years ago. Not so much now
Life span	06	Five different characters, five different adventures

Worthwhile if you're after a hack 'n' slash with D&D style, but the game shows its age worse than Cher.



WEAPONS OF MASS CONSTRUCTION



Another cool new addition to *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II* is the create-a-weapon feature. During your travels you'll run in to Shopkeeper Bartly. Bartly can do some amazing things with his hands, and one of those is building customised weapons. All you need is to turn up with a better-than-average weapon and a rune stone which will increase the power and durability of the weapon. There are also two other allocated spots for gems, and with a total of 14 different types of gem to collect while exploring the depths of BGDA II, you'll get plenty of bang for your buck.

BETTER THAN

LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

WORSE THAN

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH

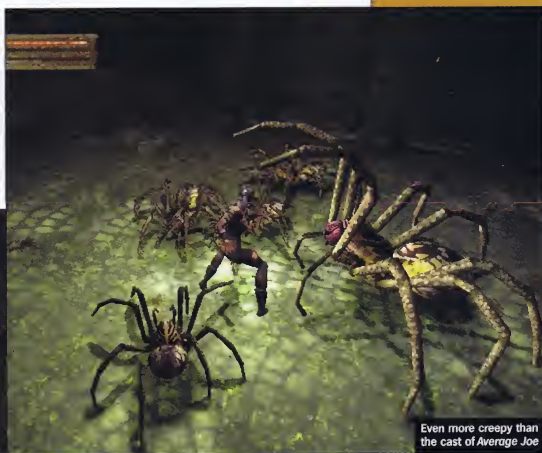
LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The RPG system is so simple that anyone can use it.

What they need to fix

Improve the combat system so it's easier to slay those pesky critters



Even more creepy than the cast of *Average Joe*



Fans of Baldur's Gate will have familiar feelings flood back



The game has all the detailed creatures you could ask for

ROLE-PLAYING GAME

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH

Battle Evil. Explore Dungeons. Play with others

X DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: UBI SOFT
DEVELOPER: SNOWBLIND
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-4
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: [HTTP://CHAMPIONSOFNORRATH.STATION.SONY.COM](http://championsofnorrath.station.sony.com)
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: YES [UK SERVERS]

X BACK STORY

Snowblind were responsible for arguably the best serious RPG on the PS2, Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance. They didn't take on duties for the sequel but rather created this very similar but much improved title that's now set in the EverQuest realms.

RPGs have always had a difficult time on consoles – even for the very best of the lot, the trusty PS2. It's not that they've been bad it's just that they're always a little odd. *Final Fantasy X-2* is just one recent example for instance. Sure it's an engaging, absorbing adventure but it's also stranger than a dog that craps crop circles. Overall RPGs on the PS2 have left us with a general feeling of "So close... and yet... not quite there."

Champions of Norrath (CON) is here. That feeling just went away. CON tells the tale of a great war that rages in a time of mystery and magic. The sides are comprised of human and elf versus a veritable universe of evil. Stylistically it will be familiar to anyone who has played *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*.

For those unfamiliar with said style the whole thing breaks down something like this: you play an adventurer from one of a number of classes (including elves, dark elves, barbarians, wizards and more). You have at your disposal an array of weapons. More weapons can either be purchased from one of the shops or found after you kill enemies.

Added to that you have other abilities (dependent on your character class) that include magical powers, melee upgrades and ranged weapon attacks. These skills can be upgraded on an ability tree, which is activated every time you level up. Using the ability tree wisely is essential, posing some moments where you have to consider whether you should upgrade your skills with sharp weapons or gain the ability to raise the dead...

Whilst CON certainly doesn't divert wildly from its predefined parameters of BG:DA it does make a number of improvements on that 2001 title. For a start there are a lot more upgrades your character can use and they're more varied. It makes a huge difference whether you choose to be a Barbarian or a Dark Elf.

Another major plus is the fact that certain dungeons, caves and crypts are randomly generated. This means the weapons you find, the foes you fight and even the



The hack 'n' slash aspects will even appeal to RPG haters

path you take will be different every time. This is a huge addition as it adds sacks of replay value and is obviously, a fundamentally cool idea.

Whether you enjoy CON or not essentially boils down to a couple of questions. Do you even enjoy big RPGs? Or, do you have many friends?

If you can answer "yes" to both questions then you should seriously consider buying CON. Put quite simply, it's one of the best hack 'n' slash RPG adventures around. With great graphics, atmospheric audio and plenty of levels to wade through, CON is a solid single player game that also doubles as a brilliant multiplayer adventure. It's a niche game but worth a go. **A** Anthony O'Connor

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	Jaw-droopingly intricate graphics. Very slick
Sound	09	Evocative music, slightly stilted voice acting
Gameplay	08	Simple, fun, effective. Bring a mate or three
Life span	09	Long with a bunch of replay value

While it doesn't reinvent the *Baldur's Gate* wheel, it does refine it so that even RPG haters will be charmed.



BETTER THAN

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE

WORSE THAN

FINAL FANTASY X

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Oodles of multiplayer fun combined with randomly generated levels. Rock!

What they need to fix

Some side quests are a little goofy. Rescuing kittens? Come on!

A BEAUTIFUL WORLD...

CON features some varied and attractive environments over seen in a PS2 game. Don't let the small size fool you, take a closer look and you'll see what we mean. Lots of cool looking places with cool looking monsters. What more can you ask for?





"Raarr! I am Dra-gon!"
"Grool And I am Konk!"



The fighting isn't the best, but battles are still fun

FIGHTING-STRATEGY

WRATH UNLEASHED

LucasArts' new strategy fighter seems like something from the dark side

DETAILS

PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: THE COLLECTIVE
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-4
OUT: APRIL
WEBSITE: WWW.LUCASARTS.COM/PRODUCTS/WRATH
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

The Collective has been behind some quality adventure titles like *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* and *Indiana Jones and The Emperor's Tomb*. This is its first shot at a strategy title.

It's not too often a game comes along that tries to establish a new genre. We've seen reinventions of adventure games and platformers before, and now LucasArts has taken a shot at reinventing the turn-based strategy genre by mixing it with a brawler.

There's a story that goes along with the main campaign mode: The four elements, earth, wind, fire and water are battling for the ultimate power, Gya. You play as one of the four characters representing the elements and battle against the three other gods for control of all four realms. These battles take place on both a board game-like field and on various battlegrounds.

The strategy portion of *Wrath Unleashed* takes place on the battlefields where your army of centaurs, ogres and unicorns – yes, unicorns – will be spread out across the board. Your opponent's army is also present and guarding certain structures which you're aiming to occupy. You have a set number of moves to use to wipe out the competition, which is where the fighting starts.

To turn your enemy into mush, you'll need to land on the same spot and fight them for control of it, much like Russell Crowe might do on a nightclub dancefloor. Here, the game turns into a regular fighting game like *Soul Calibur II* – two of you go in but only one can leave. The gameplay, however, is nothing like the top-quality *SC II*. Victory is usually achieved by button-mashing and we recommend doing this, as taking the time to pull off combos and powerful moves leaves you vulnerable.

While the idea of the campaign works well, it's the load times that stop it from being fun. Because the fights

happen often, you're constantly travelling from the board to the battleground and then back again, and the loading times are quite long.

Multiplayer-wise, *Wrath Unleashed* offers several different modes. You can compete against four other players in the campaign-like mode where you'll all battle for control of the land. Or, if you want to skip all the head-scratching bits then *Wrath Unleashed* also offers the fighting section on its own.

Surprisingly the game does not support network play even though we believe it's an ideal game for it, because its various multiplayer modes are enormously more fun than the single-player game.

While LucasArts has tried hard to bring something fresh to the table, there are just too many key problems that stop this from being a kick-ass title. While the strategy portion works well, it's the fighting section that lets the game down. Playing against mates is the best way to enjoy *Wrath Unleashed*, if you can get past the lengthy load times. **A** Paul Frew

WE WANT YOU

One of *Wrath Unleashed's* other features is the create-an-army mode. In the campaign your army is already assembled, but when you compete in multiplayer you can build your team, choosing all the different creatures in the game. Go the unicorn!



OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	07	Simple but colourful
Sound	07	Great score that adds to the mood of the game
Gameplay	06	The strategy is easy, the fighting is just button mashing
Life span	05	Multiplayer is fun and there are a few unlockables

A unique title that has more problems than shining moments, but is still worth a look.

06

BETTER THAN

GLADIUS

WORSE THAN

DYNASTY TACTICS

LAD TEST

What they nailed this time

Strategy – the board game look works and makes it easy to devise your plan

What they need to fix

Fighting – it should take more notes from the best fighters out there



So THIS is what those plastic trolls do when they grow up



"Hold still – it's time for your bath, Anglakkank!"



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SPYHUNTER 2

The ultimate combination of man and machine – a gamer and their PS2

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT
DEVELOPER: MIDWAY/
ANGEL STUDIOS
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.MIDWAY.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

SpyHunter was the original 8-bit James Bond-style vehicular combat game. With machineguns, all slicks and the Peter Gunn theme pumping, it was the game to play in the mid-80s. SpyHunter 2 is Midway's second attempt to revive the series in the 128-bit era, with mixed results.

The legendary Interceptor comes roaring back onto the PS2 as *SpyHunter* goes for another burn down the road. The CIA are employing their rotary engine-powered brand of justice against the global terrorist group Nostra, and it's you behind the wheel that must stop them, aided only by a gorgeous flame-haired femme fatale.

The Lamborghini-esque Interceptor is your main vehicle, which is equipped with an off-road mode for the tougher terrain, and can change into a jet boat in an instant. If your car gets too badly banged up, you can continue in the trike-like escape vehicle, that also doubles as a skidoo or jet-ski in the necessary environments. The 16 fairly short missions span a variety of environments with basic objectives like escorting civilian vehicles, eradicating terrorists or just getting to the end the area. Credibly, not all levels are purely linear, and some offer alternate routes to the goal.

You start the game with a fairly meagre assortment of weapons – just machineguns and road mines. As you progress through the missions different of missiles types are unlocked, but it feels like a long time between new weapons sometimes. Sadly, you can't help but feel that the re-supply truck is under-utilised. What used to be a test of skill during a high-speed dock is now just a quick cutscene and an on-rails shooting sequence.

Visually, the game's a mixed bag. The vehicles are wonderfully modelled, and the explosions fill the screen with fire. Rockets leave wispy smoke behind them and bullets trail to make them easier to dodge. The environments, however, look stark, bland and blocky as they hurtle past you.

Surprisingly, developer Angel Studios doesn't pimp the "Peter Gunn Theme" too hard and the tunes that back the action are mainly a combination of electric guitar and synthesisers – perfectly complementing the frantic pace. The unconventional pop princess Vanessa Carlton was also brought in to create the *SpyHunter 2* theme tune – it too has a real Bond flavour to it.

The two-player modes thankfully inject more life into the game. The head-to-head deathmatch is blander than a garden salad, but the co-op game makes for an interesting spin on the usual concept. Co-op allows you to play through the single-player missions but rather than splitting the screen with separate vehicles, the first player drives and controls the primary weapons, while the second operates a top-mounted turret and the rear weaponry. Aside from making deploying rear weapons a bit of guesswork, co-op play is actually quite fun.

The main downside to the game is that it's unforgivingly hard. Occasionally, a slight error can mean instant destruction. The lack of checkpoints means



you're sent back to the start of the level, losing all the progress you've made (and possibly some hair that you'll tear out in frustration as well). Combine this with the utter lack of difficulty settings and there's not a lot of leeway for less patient gamers.

Ultimately, *SpyHunter 2* is a bit too hard, which makes it a bit of a painful slog, especially for the more casual gamer, and it offers little replay value once you've knocked it over. It's worth a rental from your local video store, but it's not a keeper. **A-** Nick O'Shea

BETTER THAN

ROADKILL
WORSE THAN
TWISTED METAL, BLACK: ONLINE

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Massive, screen-filling explosions. You can almost feel the heat!

What they need to fix

It's too challenging for new players, which can all-too-often result in angst!

SUBLIMINAL MARKETING

included in the fairly extensive DVD extras is a brief history on the *SpyHunter* series, and its evolution to the current game. There has also been an advertisement included for the recently released Midway Arcade Treasures, which not only contains the original game but another '3D classics' from the once highly acclaimed Midway stable. The ironic thing is that *Arcade Treasures* is only half the price but offers so much more charm, re-playability and nostalgia value that we think it's a far better buy than *SpyHunter 2*.

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **06** Nice explosions and effects, but bland environments
Sound **07** Thumping tunes and resounding kabooms
Gameplay **06** Not as fun as the original
Life span **04** Very short-lived

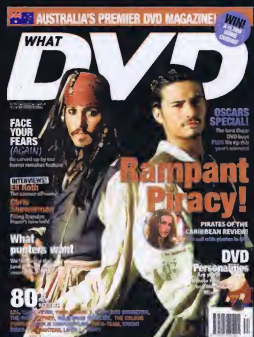
If this game was a vodka martini, it would be 'shaken about the place and spilled on your lap.'

05

DVD PLAYER HUNGRY?

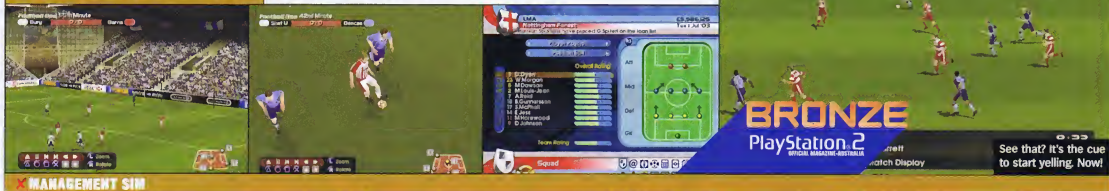


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LMA MANAGER 2004

Soccer nuts beware, this game can bruise your ego as it tests your know-how to the extreme

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.CODEMASTERS.CO.UK/MANAGERS2004/
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

You scream at the TV: "Cross it...I Hit it!" but the players can't hear you – you're wasting your breath, but you don't stop. And the one time they do what you told them to, it works and they score. "Yeah, I told 'em to do that," you boast. "If only they did it half an hour ago!"

LMA Manager 2004 allows you to take your expertise to the next level – out into the real world... well, nearly.

The game is so comprehensive. Team finances, monitoring your scouts and making sure they're keeping busy looking for the next star recruit, transferring your own out-of-form players, making sure your most in-form players always take to the pitch in the right position... and that's just the beginning.

You train your team, individual players and, like at home, you can bellow out orders at your squad during a match. If everything is just too easy, try your skills in expert mode.

Or, if it becomes too hard, LMA 2004 gives you the

option of taking the reins at another club mid-season. Is any team from 16 divisions in 6 major soccer playing nations enough to choose from?

If you happen to be a fan of fantasy football, you can also create a fantasy team. What a well-rounded game, somewhat like a soccer ball! **A** Cameron Tomarchio

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **07** You're reading a spreadsheet most of the time!
Sound **07** The pommy accent's a little annoying
Gameplay **09** Involved, very involved
Life span **09** You could play this forever

Another winner from the excellent LMA series. No wonder it is the best-selling soccer management sim!



RISK: GLOBAL DOMINATION

Will it leave you board?

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
DEVELOPER: CYBERLORE
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1-6
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.ATARI.COM.AU
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

For anyone who's never played the board game, Risk is all about ruling countries and building up armies to take over other player's countries. The first player to rule all the countries is the King of the World.

The videogame is almost identical to the board game in every way except that the characters talk and there are a few animations. Like the board game, you'll begin by selecting your territories (countries), building your armies and finally trying to take over the world.

But if you're a bit of a rebel and don't like playing by the rules then Risk also offers a couple of other gameplay modes. The first is Capital Risk where each player nominates a territory as his or her capital. The first player to own all the capitals is deemed the winner. Then there's Secret Risk where each player is assigned a special mission such as eliminating a certain enemy. The first one to complete their mission takes the prize.

The only good thing about playing Risk on PS2 is that

you won't lose any of the pieces and no one will fight over who goes first – the console decides that.

You can play against other people online, but you'd really expect this game to be a free gift – it certainly isn't worth purchasing. If you do end up picking up Risk then it will most likely face the same fate as other board games and collect dust next to your Mighty Morphin Power Rangers action figures. **A** Paul Frew

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **01** It's just a world map. Nothing special about that
Sound **02** Lots of sexual innuendos about sizes. Funny once
Gameplay **01** You'll wear out the X button, as that's all you'll use
Life span **01** The score is based on how many times you'll play it

The only Risk you'll face is wasting a whole bunch of time and money by giving this game a go.





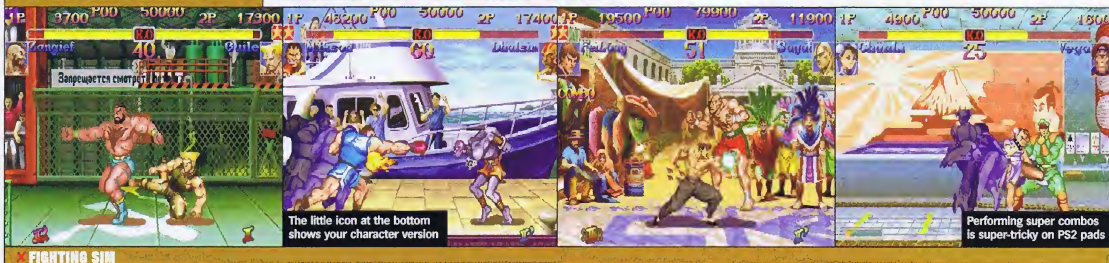
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HYPER STREET FIGHTER II ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The fighting game that changed the world gets a cake made of sawdust for its birthday

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
PRICE: \$79.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: APRIL
WEBSITE: WWW.THQ.COM.AU
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

The follow-up to 1988's nat-very-good Street Fighter arcade game, Street Fighter II basically invented the one-on-one fighter with a range of strong, varied characters, loads of special moves, fast gameplay and – accidentally, according to Capcom – the introduction of linked ‘combo’ attacks.

Yes, it really is 15 years since Street Fighter first hit arcades around the world, and to celebrate the anniversary, developer Capcom has compiled all five editions of the sequel series into one package – the twist being that you're able to pit any version of any character against any other. Featured here are: Street Fighter II: The New Challengers, Street Fighter II: Champion Edition, Street Fighter II Turbo: Hyper Fighting, Super Street Fighter II: The New Challengers and Super Street Fighter II Turbo.

The different character versions don't vary all that much, mind you. They were each only tweaked slightly over the years to balance out their strengths, and given occasional new Specials. So, being able to choose from five versions of each will only mean something to long-time fans. You know, the kind of people who were upset when Chun-Li's fireball command was changed, when Gille's voice was re-recorded or when Ken's Dragon Punch was turned into a weakened multi-hit combo.

Being Street Fighter nerds here at OPS2, we got a rush of nostalgia when we first played, with the hummable music, stylish retro graphics and some of the coolest characters ever created adding to the timeless skillful scrapping action. The graphics and sound are spot-on, and you're given the choice of three soundtracks – the original CPS-I arcade tunes, the slightly better-sounding CPS-II board tunes, or new

remixed versions. But unfortunately it doesn't do much more than provide a mere flashback for fans.

While it's great for two people, the one-player game is limited. You always fight against Super SFII Turbo editions of characters rather than a mix, plus there's only the standard arcade mode with no way of saving high scores or unlocking extras. The difficulty is also set on such a high level (even on 'Easiest') that you need plenty of SFII experience to enjoy battling the computer. Having to use the Dual Shock 2's shoulder buttons to pull off fiddly moves also detracts a little from the experience. Some kind of arcade stick is definitely recommended.

Street Fighter II: The Animated Movie is included in sub-DVD quality, but this really isn't enough of an extra for a package that's supposed to be celebrating one of the most important games ever made. **B-** Ed Lomas

STREET FIGHTING ADVENTURES

Street Fighter II: The Animated Movie is included on the game disc, and can be accessed from the options menu. This isn't the terrible live action one starring Jean-Claude Van Damme and Kylie Minogue – this is the kick-ass anime movie from 1995, which sees evil Bison trying to force Ryu to work for him while various other characters have loads of scraps.



OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **06** Still very cool, but not up to Soul Calibur II standards.
Sound **06** Fantastic tunes played on cheap keyboards.
Gameplay **08** Fast, fun, infinitely deep and incredibly skillful.
Life span **04** Not enough features even to keep fans playing long.

Still plays brilliantly, but unless you were into Street Fighter II in its heyday, this won't do anything for you.

06

BETTER THAN

STREET FIGHTER EX 3

WORSE THAN

GUILTY GEAR X

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

It's got the classic arcade look, sound and feel just right.

What they need to fix

For the 20th anniversary they really should give us some more features.



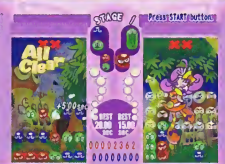
MINISTRY XXVI

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*Not strictly true



PUZZLE

PUYO POP FEVER

Aaaargh! The colours are melting my eyes... but I must not blink! Aiiieee!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: **ATARI**
 DEVELOPER: **SONIC TEAM**
 PRICE: **\$49.95**
 PLAYERS: **1-2**
 OUT: **NOW**
 WEBSITE: **WWW.ATARI.COM.AU**
 60HZ MODE: **YES**
 WIDESCREEN: **NO**
 SURROUND SOUND: **NO**
 ONLINE: **NO**

The Puyo games first appeared in the days when joypads were made of wood and bone, and graphics processors were made of pebbles and mud. They're popular in Japan, but only occasionally make it overseas, often in disguise – as Kirby's *Avalanche* on SNES, for example. But no need to hide our games behind mascots – we're big enough to appreciate Puyo Pop in its original form, complete with singing onions, squeaking wizards and Frankenstein's monster-baby in a wheelbarrow.

It's a puzzle game in the Tetris falling-blocks-in-a-well style, only here you're trying match up four or more similarly coloured 'Puyos' in order to make them 'Pop'. Set up chain reactions of disappearing Puyos and you launch solid Puyos across to your opponent's well, making things trickier for them. It's simple, but there's near endless scope for improving reactions and planning.

The 'Fever' part is new – fill up a meter and a bonus well appears, where you can set off big-scoring combos. With it, you can completely turn round a match, which makes two-player games exciting but can also detract from the pure Puyo-popping gameplay. 'Fever' is optional.

It's cute, the characters are wacky, and the franticness is addictive. For head-to-head high-tension puzzling it's hard to beat. **B-** Ed Lomas

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **07** Eye-scorchingly colourful and painfully cheerful
Sound **05** Pops, squeaks and crazy screaming voices
Gameplay **08** Fast, fun, hectic and addictive
Life span **07** There's always time for a quick two-player game

One of the smartest and most frantic two-player puzzle games on PS2. But please **DO** remember to blink!



ACTION

UNDERWORLD: THE ETERNAL CONFLICT

Even less fun than the movie

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: **PLAY IT**
 DEVELOPER: **LUCKY CHICKEN**
 PRICE: **\$29.95**
 PLAYERS: **1**
 OUT: **NOW**
 WEBSITE: **WWW.JUSTPLAYIT.COM/UNDERWORLD.HTM**
 60HZ MODE: **NO**
 WIDESCREEN: **NO**
 SURROUND SOUND: **NO**
 ONLINE: **NO**

The game's website declares there's more simultaneous action on-screen than in any other game of its type. We've seen more action at Tuesday night bingo down the RSL. It also says that players can experience some of the most powerful weapons ever. If pistols, shotguns and flamethrowers are the most powerful weapons ever, we ask: how many games have the developers played?

Everything in *Underworld* is bad. The controls are sloppy, the gameplay jerks, the entire package is rough as guts and it looks like it was put together in an arvo. *Underworld: The Eternal Conflict* casts you as either one of the vampire death-dealers, or as a werewolf. The half-a-dozen page manual tells you why they're at odds with each other but it's really difficult to care with a game this appalling. You'll need to run through each level killing enemies. Not exactly complicated, or fun.

You might be thinking, "it's a budget game, so of course it'll be a little rough." Budget or otherwise, there's plenty of better ways to spend 30 bucks. There's PSone games that put its graphics to shame! Its core gameplay and collision detection is woeful. This is one vampire game that sucks. Hard. **B-** Luke Reilly

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics **03** Wouldn't even make a PSone sweat
Sound **02** Repetitive music, voices ripped from the film
Gameplay **02** Run around and kill everything in sight. Repeat.
Life span **02** A few minutes and you'll never play it again

The movie was average at best, but the game is an absolute shocker. Avoid at all costs.



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Recommended viewing for your PlayStation 2 cinema system

S.W.A.T.

Director: Clark Johnson **Starring:** Samuel L. Jackson, Colin Farrell, Michelle Rodriguez, LL Cool J, Brian Van Holt, Josh Charles, Jeremy Renner, Olivier Martinez **Distributor:** Columbia **Rating:** M15+ **Out:** March **Price:** \$39.95



FILM: S.W.A.T. features a pretty clichéd cop flick storyline complete with a bureaucratic desk-bound Captain and a motley squad that's just one wrong turn away from losing their badges. We've certainly seen this before, but S.W.A.T. does what few films in the genre do; it provides plenty of tension by building up to the action rather than going straight for the early money shot.

The first half of the S.W.A.T.'s plot focuses on bad boy Jim Street (played fairly naturally by real-life bad boy Colin Farrell), a disgraced S.W.A.T. officer and former Navy SEAL seeking redemption. The assembling of the S.W.A.T. team is fleshed out

with plenty of training missions and some genuinely funny sequences.

The second half is devoted to preventing the cold-blooded Frenchman wanted by Interpol; Alex Montel (Olivier Martinez) from escaping prison with the assistance of just about every lowlife in LA after the villain's offer of a \$100 million reward. Jackson's formidable onscreen presence and the quality of the supporting cast keep things rolling along at a brisk pace. **6/10**

EXTRAS: Two commentaries, eight deleted scenes, five behind-the-scenes featurettes, gag reel, filmographies and trailers. **7/10**

VERDICT: Hardly the greatest action flick ever, but it does make for a fun night in. **B- TO**

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Swat went on behind the scenes

There are eight rather lengthy deleted scenes, but they're only really worth it for the novelty of seeing a scene without the special effects backgrounds added in place of the green screen. Just under an hour of nicely presented behind-the-scenes featurettes include a look at the sound editing, complete with noisy demonstrations of the various firearms and a look at the original S.W.A.T. television series.



We're not the only ones fed up with City Rail's service



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"Well I didn't know you were supposed to just leave the soap on the ground"

Red Dwarf Season IV

Director: Various **Starring:** Chris Barrie, Craig Charles, Danny John-Jules, Robert Llewellyn **Distributor:** Roadshow **Rating:** PG **Out:** Now **Price:** \$59.95



FILM: British comedy sci-fi series Red Dwarf enjoys the best one-liners this side of Blackadder (and coming second to that show in the witty banter stakes is no small achievement), while the cast – especially Chris Barrie as Rimmer – displays a level of comic timing that must make budding talents want to quit in despair.

Series four boasted some of the sillier, yet still loveable, episode concepts – they encounter a remote prison where people's unjust actions are turned against them, there's the fundamentally flawed white hole concept, the pleasure GELF, and who can forget the crew being pursued by the remnants of Uster's genetically

modified curry?

If the Red Dwarf series had a lull, season four was probably it. Still, Red Dwarf at its weakest is still 110 per cent better than most of the comedies floating around out there. And unlike many comedy series, it actually returned to form after this minor bump in the road. **7/10**

EXTRAS: Some entertaining facts to be found in the cast and crew commentaries, interviews covering every episode in the series, some amusing 'smeg-ups', the cast guesting on a cookery show, deleted scenes and a number of hidden Easter eggs. **9/10**

VERDICT: Just because it's not as good as the second and third series, doesn't mean it's not smegging good value. **A- KA**

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Everyone Jump

By far the best episode of series – Dimension Jump – sees Chris Barrie playing dual roles as Ace Rimmer and Arnold Rimmer. Ace comes from an alternate reality where one childhood decision transformed the normally selfish, snivelling coward of a man into a heroic test pilot who has the girls swooning. Barrie mentions how the transformation was so dramatic that girls on the set started looking at him differently,



Scarface: Special Edition

Director: Brian De Palma **Starring:** Al Pacino, Steven Bauer, Michelle Pfeiffer, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio
Distributor: Universal **Rating:** R18+ **Out:** Now **Price:** \$39.95



FILM: Plenty of quality gangster films preceded *Scarface*, so it needed to be something special if it was going to have an

impact. A bunch of actors bumbling on Cuban accents doesn't sound like a great way of going about it, but when one of them is the legendary Al Pacino, it's hard to go wrong.

The star of *The Godfather* movies plays Tony Montana, a Cuban criminal who floods into America with thousands of refugees to escape Fidel Castro's dictatorship. Here, Tony believes, the world can be his. *Scarface* works thanks to

Pacino's utterly convincing performance. Over more than two and a half hours, we experience his thirst for power and his gradual attrition into a drug-fuelled, lonely madness. Despite his super-violent tendencies, on some level we feel for him. He just wanted the good life, same as the rest of us. **8/10**

EXTRAS: New documentaries about the original inspiration for the movie, Pacino's method acting, the making of the movie and some tedious deleted scenes. **7/10**

VERDICT: The extras won't blow your circuits, but combined with such a cool movie they form a pretty attractive package. **A- KA**

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Scarface: the TV version

One amusing feature on the disc is a brief look at how the movie was edited in order to get it past American TV censors – quite an achievement considering the original version contains 160 'F' words! Cue lots of dubbing and all manner of bizarre new insults, lots of which involve plucked chickens, pineapples, lame brains, mother pushers and the oft-used phrase 'fake it'.



DVD OF THE MONTH

"What do you mean, pink's not a tough colour?"

Battle Royale: Collector's Edition

Director: Kinji Fukasaku **Starring:** Fujiwara Tatsuya, Maeda Aki, Yamamoto Yura, Beot Takeshi
Distributor: Shock **Rating:** R18+ **Out:** Now **Price:** \$39.95



FILM: Nothing in Fukasaki's seminal cult classic makes all that much sense. But somehow, in some way, that doesn't really matter. What does matter is that it delivers a hefty body count amid a ridiculous blood bath, winding up as a sort of teenage/survival/hacker flick that's quite unlike anything else.

Set in the near future, Japan has gone to the dogs: unemployment rages at 15 per cent and high school students are rebelling against adults. Japan, the hard-arses that they are, devise the Battle Royale Act to get back at these young

whippersnappers. It involves randomly selecting high school students, flying them to a deserted island, slapping remote controlled explosive necklaces on them and forcing them to kill each other.

The film uses its wacky premise to both good and bad results. On the positive, it produces some great black humour but the 'why-bother' characterisations are painful – just eat lead already! **7/10**

EXTRAS: Behind the scenes docs, press conferences, trailers, audition and rehearsal footage. **7/10**

VERDICT: Worth seeing if you're into tongue-in-cheek bloodletting and aren't fussy about plots. **B- JE**

EXTRA! EXTRA!

A Special Edition of *Battle Royale* has already been released in some other territories, and will be coming to Australia sometime in the future. It contains extra scenes, even more violence and gore, and an alternate ending. The Collector's Edition contains a behind-the-scenes look at the shooting of one of the Special Edition scenes.



More students demonstrate about excessive homework

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RE-BOOT

Need help? So what – it's not as bad as cheating at exam time!



So we all loved the books, we love the movies and now, thanks to EA, we all love the games. Based on the letters OPS2 has been receiving over the past month or so, it seems that plenty of you are having some trouble getting yourselves through *LOTR: Return of the King*. Fear not young goblins, 'cos we've put together this playguide so you can finally close this chapter in your life! OPS2 hotshots have also whipped up some how-tos on both *Manhunt* and *FIFA 2004*. Time to relive some headaches...

James Ellis

Tips Editor

LONGER THAN A NIGHT AT THE OSCARS

LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING

We help you more than Tolkien himself ever could...

GENERAL TIPS

■ EXPERIENCE METER

The Experience Meter is the long blue bar above your character's name. The bar fills as you slay enemies and gain points. When full you will gain a level, which in turn opens up new moves that can be purchased.

■ SKILL METER

The reading on this meter affects how many points you'll acquire from killing the next enemy. Kill many in a row to get different ratings, ranging through fair, good, excellent and perfect. That latter 'perfect' rating can only be achieved if you are in Perfect Mode. In this mode your attacks are more powerful and the points you earn from enemy kills are maximised.

■ PARRYING

While tapping the parry button you're basically impervious to damage from all enemies besides cave trolls and ents. Additionally, all the hits you parry contribute toward the Skill Meter. This means it's ideal to parry a few blows before

hacking into your enemies in order to help reach Perfect Mode. Parrying is also handy when facing scores of archers as you can block their schools of arrows.

■ UPGRADES

The first thing you need to purchase is the Goblin Hewer combo. This three-hit beauty is your basic combo and you'll be using it throughout the entire game. Apart from buying it specifically for whichever character you're currently using, it's worth spending the extra points and buying it for everyone else as well. Other mandatory upgrades are the instant kill moves, the Orc Bane, Warrior Bane and Bane of Sauron. These moves are counter-attacking moves that get you straight into Perfect Mode. Additionally, while performing each of these moves you're invulnerable to damage, making them handy if you're in the middle of an angry orc mob. Other priority purchases are improving your health, your special ability, your clear-out attack (performed by holding down your Strong attack button) and your projectile attack.



IN RE-BOOT THIS MONTH...

82	LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING	TACTICS
86	MANHUNT	TACTICS
88	FIFA 2004	TACTICS
92	JAK AND DAXTER II	CHEATS
92	MAX PAYNE 2	CHEATS
92	BATMAN: RISE OF SIN TZU	CHEATS

THE WIZARD'S PATH HELM'S DEEP

This is a training mission to help you get accustomed to the basic moves in the game. You'll take on some uruks in the initial area you're dropped in before being directed up a ladder to the left. Once on top of the fortress wall you'll get an opportunity to use your projectile attack to take out some more nasties. Now follow Legolas down the rope using the context-sensitive Action button. Finally, fire each of the three catapults to blow up the explosive cart on the bridge.

THE ROAD TO ISENGARD

This level sees you pursue the fleeing uruk-hai from Helm's Deep into Fangorn Forest. You'll start off on a fairly linear track with a few uruks to dispatch before eventually coming to a path and checkpoint. Follow the path down into a small valley which is hosting a battle between ents and orcs. A counter at the top of your screen signifies how many enemies must be destroyed before the way out of the valley opens up. You can either hang back, letting the ents take care of the quota, or join the fray yourself. You're after Experience Points, so join in. Move to one of the two points where enemies are flowing into the area and take out as many as you can. Just get ready to move when you see an ent heading your way as they won't differentiate between you and your enemies.

Once the quota is complete an ent will shift some rocks and open up a path for you to continue along. Continue through till you get to the hill overlooking Isengard. Over the other side of the gorge, to the right, are a handful of towers with archers positioned on top. You'll notice that each tower has an explosive cart near its base. Shoot each cart to see the towers crumble then make your way across the bridge, taking out the two stationed uruks. Move around to the right then down the narrow path. Get ready for some close-range archers just off-screen to the left. Quickly take them both out and continue around to the path's end. Here you'll find an ent trying to break one of the dam's supports while copping flaming arrows from orc archers. Go down and take out the uruk with the life bar first, then turn your attention to the archers adjacent to you and on the higher ledge in the distance. When the archers are killed the ent extinguishes his flames and continues pulling at the dam support. Your job is now to keep the continuous stream of archers off his back, while dispatching any uruks that charge down the path towards you. Don't worry about running out of projectiles – dispatching uruks yields top-up icons. The mission ends when the dam breaks.

MINAS TIRITH – TOP OF THE WALL

We hope you've managed to purchase some combos and upgrades as you'll certainly need them here. It can be a little tricky to orientate yourself around this level because



the map in the screen corner doesn't rotate itself as you move about. Your main objective is to prevent an overflow of uruks from getting up onto the wall. To do this you have to knock down the ladders as they appear using your physical attack. If ever the walls get too inundated with uruks you can jump down onto the ledge in front of the wall and knock down a few of the ladders without worrying about being attacked. Don't rely on this too much or you'll only amass a meagre amount of experience points. Use your combos to get to Perfect Mode, and also use your special ability to clear out packs of uruks.

Eventually cave trolls will start rolling some siege towers towards the walls. Take out the towers with your projectile attack. Finally, a siege tower will make it to one side of the wall. There's nothing you can do about this. Take out all the uruks that have gotten out then turn your attention towards the tower. After it's destroyed, rush down the stairs to the front gate of the city with all the other soldiers to see the mission's conclusion.

MINAS TIRITH – COURTYARD

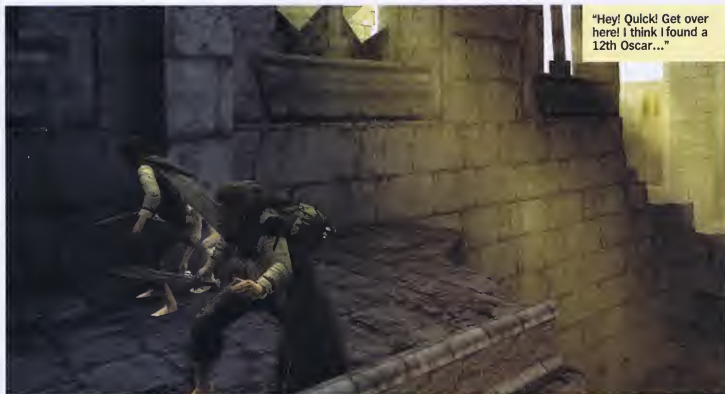
We hope you've got some spare underwear with you for this mission. You must see 200 Gondor civilians get to safety by defending them from all manner of Mordor beasts. The enemy will attack in various formations, getting tougher and stronger as the quota reaches completion. You'll start off going up against uruks and shielded orcs, but eventually armoured enemies, archers and multiple cave trolls will join the fray. The key is to stay back near the doorway where the civilians are headed, this way you can deal with any gangs of uruks and orcs blocking the passage to safety. Also, by staying back, you don't have to worry too much about the cave trolls, as they largely stick to the centre of the area. That said, they can dispatch civilians quickly, so use arrows and spears to kill them pronto. Your biggest concern is the armoured enemies. These guys require a strong attack to dislodge their armour before you can start working away at their health bar. Take them out as soon as they get close or they'll be a potentially fatal annoyance. If you're running low on health there are a couple of health icons in breakable barrels littered around the level, but try to save using these for the mission's hectic last moments. Use your instant-kill moves (if you've bought them yet) to rapidly fire you into Perfect Mode. Once there you'll be able to take down the enemy packs with greater ease.

THE KING'S PATH PATHS OF THE DEAD

This is a nice and easy level to kick off The King's Path. You're accompanied by the other two Hunters while you journey into the Dwimorberg Haunted Mountain in search of the King of the Dead. As you progress, barriers will be erected to block your path, and the only way they can be removed is by slaying all the enemies in the area. If you're having trouble, stand near one of your supporting players to make sure they help you out.

THE KING OF THE DEAD

The first boss encounter in the game is pretty easy if you play your cards right. Be sure to stand away from the king as he rises up out of the ground. He'll then come at you with three slashes. Parry each, then reply with a Goblin Hewer. If you haven't got this combo yet or he's hitting





Dragon: more than just an Aussie rock band from the '70s

you before you finish, use lots of speed attacks, being ready to parry if he starts to attack. He'll then vanish into the ground and call up some enemies for you to dispatch. Stay back near the three rocks when he does this to keep the archers out of range. Then fire an arrow at each melee attacker to lure them towards you. Dispatch them one at a time before shooting the archers. Continue doing this till the cut-scene changes and the king appears in front of his statue. You need to get behind one of the three rocks before he hits you with his instant-kill wind attack. Each time he uses this attack some of the rock will be blown away. Stay behind the centre of each rock and you'll be fine. The third wind will destroy the rock completely, but you'll remain unscathed. Immediately start parrying after each rock is destroyed as the king will lunge at you with a five-slash combo. Wait for him to finish then use speed attacks. Keep this up to finish him off.

Next up you've got to escape from the crumbling interior of the mountain. Start running as soon as the cut-scene finishes. Your main concern is not being crushed by falling rocks, so take note of the places where dust lands and take that as a warning not to run nearby. Along the way out you'll have to fight your way through some tough enemy hordes. Don't dawdle when dispatching them lest you take too long and are crushed by the falling roof.

THE SOUTHERN GATE

This mission is the place for levelling-up your character. Your aim is to open then pass through the large gate. As you start the level move towards the gate to see a nasty cave troll come and block your path. If you've got an upgraded projectile you can try and take him out then and there, otherwise save him for later when you've got a spare moment. Now you must hack your way through seas of orcs and uruk-hai and activate all three catapults. Once this is done, either hang around in the area, killing more goons and improving your level, or head up the newly-made path into the broken right-side tower. Climb up and slay the awaiting uruks and the cave troll. Now hit the gate switch. Once the gate is open a squad of uruks will come streaming through. Tip the boiling pots on them, then make your way down, around and through the gate.

PELENNOR FIELDS

This level is nasty. You start out in a brawl with uruks and warriors. Eventually you'll see a cut-scene of Eowyn and Merry stranded in the path of an oliphaunt. You'll now be on a higher ridge where you can start shooting the oliphaunt with your projectile. Once it's down, however, another will come behind it. Presuming the foul beast is closer to the other side of the battleground, you'll have to move down the ridge, using the path in its middle, across the battlefield and onto the opposing ridge to get close enough to attack. This happens a few times. Be sure to check which side the oliphaunt is closest to and don't bother engaging the enemies in the battlefield – you don't have enough time. Eventually the Witch King will start attacking Eowyn and Merry on his flying beast. Attack him with projectiles from the ridge, being careful to fend off attacking uruks and an oncoming oliphaunt. Repeat till the mission ends.

THE BLACK GATE

This mission is the big finale. First up you have to take on the Witch King. He's not too hard though, just bludgeon him with some big combos and he'll be gone in no time. Next, you'll find waves of orcs, uruks and warriors pouring into the cauldron-like area to decimate you. Apart from the hobbits, all the other standard characters in the game are here at this time and you'll fail the mission if any of them die. Thankfully health bars will come up for them on screen if they're sustaining too much damage. The probable cause each time is likely to be enemy archers or armoured enemies which your comrades really struggle with. What this means is that the armoured enemies are your responsibility to kill. Rush up, hit them with a strong attack to get rid of their armour, and then thrash them to bits. Also be sure to take out enemy archers quickly as they prove to be most annoying when you're engaging other melee attackers. As the mission progresses you may find archers are firing at your comrades from the right and left – take them out.

Eventually, after all the waves are finished (and you'll be able to tell by the icon in the top right of the screen) you'll go up against the Nazgul. Don't try and take them with your sword, instead exploit their weakness against fire. If you have a flaming projectile, use it to carve each of them up in moments. Otherwise use the pots scattered around the area. More enemies will come after this. Don't attack, just parry them as the mission ends moments later.

THE HOBBIT'S PATH ESCAPE FROM OSGILATH

The hobbit missions can be a bit trickier due to the characters' weaker fighting style. You'll often have to rely on scampering through a bustling battle rather than trying to take on every orc in sight. Your elven cloak is vital as well, though early in the game it cannot keep you hidden for long. When spotting an area to sneak through, move into it as far as possible before activating your cloak. This ensures your very finite cloaking time limit is used to maximum efficiency.

The first stage starts you off controlling Sam, following Gollum and Frodo through an under-siege Osgiliath. After taking out a few orcs you'll find yourself on a rooftop. A Nazgul timer will then appear in the top right of the screen. You'll fail the mission if you're openly on a rooftop for too long, and the counter moves all the way around. Any shelter can be used for cover though. Stay under such till the counter regresses back to its start, and then continue on. Save your cloak for moments when you're on rooftops and there are too many orcs to casually hack through.

You'll eventually come to some stairs leading upwards. At the top is a bell you can interact with and send crashing down over the top of orcs below. Move through the hole it makes in the wall. After darting about over rooftops and dodging orcs you'll descend into Osgiliath's sewers. At the end of this path are orc archers and a fat armoured enemy. They're all guarding a gateway that leads out of the city. Take out the archers from a distance with your arrows. Do not go near the armoured enemy until everyone else is dispatched. To take him out, slip in a few strong hits as you parry his attacks till his armour drops off. Now keep hitting him with speed attacks and be ready to parry if he raises one of his weapons. He'll eventually keel over. Open the gate and move through.

SHELOB'S LAIR

This mission may initially seem confusing as there are quite a few dead ends. But as long as you keep moving in a uniform direction, either left or right, you'll be okay. The best way to deal with the big spiders you encounter is to hit them once with a strong attack, then your finisher.



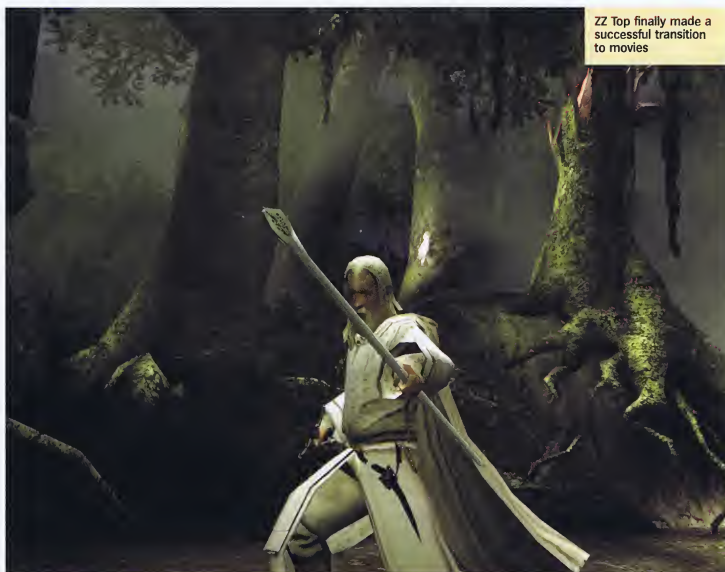
Alternatively, the Goblin Hower combo works well. The small spiders will either part for you or require you to throw down a fire stake that will cause them to scamper. If they're the latter, don't try and bustle your way through because you'll likely end up dead. There are also some experience point bonus icons to be found in some of this mission's dead ends, though they only add on 1000 points so are perhaps not worth worrying about.

You'll come up against quite a few orcs here as well. Usually there are stakes around that, when thrown, set fire to overhanging webs, taking out multiple foes. There are a lot of places in this mission where you can interact with fire and rocks to take out enemies. Also know that to get through the webbed passageways you'll need to hit them with a lit stake. Remember to use your cloak if the orcs get too much, and you'll eventually find your way to the boss battle against Shelob.

She'll dash toward you with a three-hit combo that can be parried. Time a strong attack as she draws near to you, then deal out some follow-up damage. She'll retreat every now and then, hurling out smaller spiders that you already know how to deal with. Take them out at your own pace as she won't attack again till most of them have been killed. Continue using the above method on Shelob to complete the mission.

CIRITH UNGOL

Use your elven cloak to trigger the bridge switch without being detected. The bridge should fall and take out most of the orcs. Now either take on the fat armoured orc, or scoot up the bridge. Take out the two uruks, the two orcs, and finally another armoured orc. Move into the next room where uruks and orcs are battling each other. Move slowly down the stairs, using spears and fire cauldrons to take out enemies when you can. You'll eventually spot a corridor on the left. Move up there but watch out for the shielded orc who quickly rears his head. Keep moving till you get to a congested room with uruks and orcs going at each other. Sneaking through might be tough because of the congestion. Take out as many nasties as you want, using combos and the fire cauldrons. In the next room there's an even bigger bluff going down. Zoom along the left wall and ascend the stairs. There are orcs along the way so be ready to dispatch them. You'll come to a corridor on your left leading to a balcony with a fire



ZZ Top finally made a successful transition to movies

cauldron. Get to Perfect Mode by using the Orc Bane move then rush to the balcony and tip the fire cauldron on the enemies below for massive points. Continue back up the stairs and slay the fat armoured orc. Now activate the rope to dispatch most of the orcs and uruks downstairs. Go back down and move outside. You'll be able to run past most of the enemies here. Drop the bridge then move up to the ladder on the left. Climb up and dispatch any orcs and uruks. There's a point where you can roll some explosive barrels onto enemies below. It's desirable to perform the Bane of Sauron move on either adjacent uruk before doing so. The nasties will eventually retreat onto a bridge leading to the top of the fortress. Move up toward the fortress' siege weapon and the fat armoured orc. After killing him use the siege weapon to take out the enemies on the bridge. Now bolt up the bridge before it crumbles beneath you.

Next up you'll have to take on Gorbag. Run away from him towards one of the places where you can grab a spear. Throw one to destroy his shield and a second to stun him. Now hit him with the biggest combo you've got - Dark Deliverance is a good one if you have it. Repeat the process until he's dead.

THE CRACK OF DOOM

The last level of the game, The Crack of Doom sees you go up against Gollum who's come to possess the Ring of Power. In keeping with the story you're forced to control Frodo Baggins. Don't worry though; you only need the basic moves to beat him. Start the level and move to the edge of the platform. Run around in a circle, avoiding Gollum till he gets near the edge. When he does, unleash a barrage of speed attacks. If done correctly, Gollum will start to lose his balance. Now hit him with a strong or physical attack. He'll drop down and hold on to the edge of the platform. Perform your finishing ground stab to make him plummet down the side of the platform.

You'll have to do this a few times, during which you may sustain some injury. Keep looking around the platform as health appears randomly. Eventually you'll strike him down for the last time, sending him and the Ring of Power into the fiery molten bowels of the Crack of Doom.

BONUS MISSIONS

Saurman's Palantir (complete The Crack of Doom to open up this bonus level).

Sauron's Palantir (complete The Crack of Doom and get Sam, Gandalf and either Legolas, Gimli or Aragorn up to level 10 to open up this deathtrap).

Getting through these two bonus missions is next to impossible without the cheats you would have unlocked at the same time. But for those brave players who want to try, remember that after dispatching each round of enemies you get a health pick-up. If you don't need it then leave it on the ground. If you get through the easy early rounds without having to use any health, by the time those nigh-on impossible end rounds come you'll have some health you can run over at any time. Also, to help with the archers, parry the hurl of arrows they fire at you till you get to Perfect Mode, then attack them back with increased damage. Beating these bonus levels may, erm, take a few attempts. ♫



WE DISH OUT SOME BRUTAL ADVICE

MANHUNT

Why? Because plastic bags are only the beginning

Having trouble with some of the murderous hunters in Rockstar's gory smash? Our level breakdown will help you through all the tough bits.

LEVEL ONE: BORN AGAIN

Manhunt kicks off with the obligatory training level. Just follow Starkweather's instructions and you'll be creeping, slicing, hacking and murdering in no time. The first few hunters are a piece of pie, but you'll soon come to an area at the end of an alleyway where two hunters dwell. It's a bad idea to take more than one hunter on without some heavy firepower, so cause a distraction as far down the alleyway as you can (doing it close to the hunters won't give you much time to chase your victim down), hide in the shadows, then take out the hunter when he starts moving back to this position. Repeat on the second hunter. Eventually, you'll come to a mall rooftop with another pair of hunters. Cause some distractions if you want to split them up, and then take them out one at a time.

LEVEL TWO: DOORWAY INTO HELL

After you take out a few hunters, you'll acquire the very handy baseball bat. It's a good, fast weapon to use while executing, but of course causes some noise while doing so. It's handy when you're in a brawl – just make sure you use the heavy attack to take out opponents quickly. You'll come across a padlocked door in this mission. To open it, you'll have to acquire the crowbar. You'll earn this after dispatching a lone hunter in a brawl. When you face him,

use the heavy attack, remember to block and you'll eventually score the crowbar. Now, move back towards the door, taking out any hunters on the way, and press **ⓐ**. You'll then be forced into another melee with a single hunter. Take him out to complete the mission.

LEVEL THREE: ROAD TO RUIN

In this escapee you'll come across a few hunters who'll pounce out at you from nowhere. Either go toe-to-toe and take them out, or, if you can, run and hide, then execute them. You'll also come across a few padlocked doors, so keep the crowbar. Also, be wary of a few areas that feature multiple hunters – the toughest area being when you ascend some stairs from the basement. Three hunters will be waiting in an adjacent alley. Cause a distraction and lure them back down into the darkness. Some hunters move faster than others, so try and poach the slowest one when they return to their positions. With two to go, move up the stairs while staying hidden in the shadows. Creep up on each one when the coast is clear. Break through

the final padlock to complete the mission.

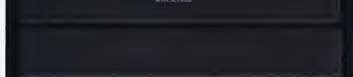
LEVEL FOUR: WHITE TRASH

Acquire a wire, take out one of the hunters ahead, and then take their metal bat. Move on through the level taking out hunters from the shadows. Get hold of a knife to cut through the rope-tied gate. Sooner or later, you'll see a cut-scene showing you the location of the nail gun. Throw the nearby brick through the trailer window to lure the hunter out. After he's been taken care of, grab the nail gun from inside the trailer. Two hunters will then burst in. Take them out with your new toy (remember to aim for the head) then grab the painkillers. Keep on the path till you find the gate with the electric lock. Continue on, killing hunters one at a time (use the nail gun to blow up the blue gas canisters when hunters are nearby for easy kills). Activate the gate's power switch then take out the next three thugs. Hug the wall around to the right and execute the hunter stationed at the gate.

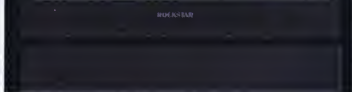
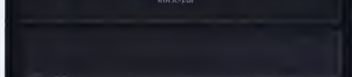
LEVEL FIVE: FUELLED BY HATE

Moving through this mission you'll come to an area with a crane and a few hunters. Take out the thugs then stick to the right to find your way into the hangar and acquire the gasoline. Take it back to the crane, removing resistance on the way, and use the crane to crush the slew of hunters who come at you. There are two techniques for being effective with the crane: you can either hold down the **ⓐ** button and drop the fridge directly on top of them, or alternatively you can slide the fridge along the ground and knock the hunters off their feet.

It's even grainer than a home movie from the Paris Hilton Collection



Even grainer than a home movie from the Tommy Lee Collection



The other tricky area is toward the end of the level when you're coming down the gravel ramp and there are four hunters patrolling the area beneath. Start firing on one of the hunters, and then shoot the rest in the head as they run up the ramp towards you.

LEVEL SIX: GROUNDS FOR ASSAULT

This level sees you lose all your weapons and go up against the machete-obsessed Wardogs. Take out the hunters ahead, liberating a machete in the process, and then cut open the rope-tied door. You'll then have to fight your way through an area or two packed with hunters. Split them up then take them out. You'll often be spotted and have to run to cover so keep your stamina meter full. Grab the crowbar from the guarded grizzly bear cave to get past the padlocked gate. You'll soon be in an area with a hunter acting as a sniper up ahead. After dispensing with the nearby hunters, find the tunnel under the building and move up the ramp. When at the top, duck and cause a distraction while still on the stairs. The sniper should then turn towards the restaurant, providing you with the chance to creep up and execute him from behind.

LEVEL SEVEN: STRAPPED FOR CASH

This level sees four of your family members held at bait. Every time you are spotted, one is executed. To complete the mission, you must save at least one. The good news is that you finally get your mitts on a gun. Also, even if you are spotted, you'll always have a brief chance to take out the hunter before they run back and kill your kin – so be ready. On the whole, just stick to the shadows, create some distractions and try not to be seen. Use glass shards and other silent weapons when you can, relying on the gun to fend off multiple attackers. You'll also get your hands on a tranquilliser rifle towards the end of the level. Zoom in and shoot the hunters in the head for an instant, but not permanent, takedown.

LEVEL EIGHT: VIEW OF INNOCENCE

The main thing you need to know when taking on this level is how to effectively use cover while simultaneously engaging in a firefight. Grab the gun at the start of the level and get used to running up to cover and pressing **Q**. You can then spring into a firing position, before releasing the button and taking cover again. However, there are a few tips that will make your gun-slinging exploits more successful. Firstly, when using the shotgun or pistol, only ever fire off one round at a time. Staying exposed any longer than that will lead to you taking damage. Secondly, try to relocate ever so slightly when behind cover. This way when you next pop out your enemies will be forced to line you up again. Thirdly, remember to drop into free aim (**R3** + **Q**) and take out enemies on higher or lower floors (go for headshots). Finally, if you can, wait for charging enemies to be close to you before firing at them. This is not always possible, as they often sneakily take cover themselves and attack you from range. To finish the mission: take the tape (record store) and camera (toy shop) to Pirsio's, move down into the basement, turn the power on and go back up to the TV near the bar's entrance.



Just in case you ever wondered what happened to Skeleton

LEVEL NINE: DRUNK DRIVING

This level isn't too demanding. Just keep the hobo away from trouble and in the shadows, dispatch any hunters ahead, then come back for him. The toughest area involves the three hunters who are warming themselves by the fire. They run a lot, meaning it's difficult to creep up on them. Try and find an object like a bottle or hunter's head to distract them and buy you enough execution time. Even then, stick to level-1 executions. Eventually you'll get a shotgun off a slain hunter. Use it. Work your way through the church grounds and blow enemies away.

LEVEL TEN: GRAVEYARD SHIFT

This level is little more than a blast-a-thon. Take cover and use the shooting tips explained in the View of Innocence section. Shoot the blue gas canisters to cause some decent explosions and shorten otherwise lengthy gun fights. When going down beneath the grates to activate the circuit breaker, don't move through the green gas or you'll sustain damage. While progressing through this level, don't walkover painkillers till you absolutely need them.

LEVEL ELEVEN: MOUTH OF MADNESS

You will now find yourself in a nutbag hospital. Early on, use wires and cleavers to take out the hunters. Soon, you'll come to an area with no fewer than six hunters together – the most you've had to deal with so far. This section can be tricky to get through. Separate the hunters with distractions and use the abundant cover of darkness to hide when you get spotted. Grab the kerosene can from one of the dilapidated greenhouses and place it against the bricked-up tower entrance. Shoot it from a distance, then enter. Activate the door switch up the top of the tower. The next room can be a bit difficult. Hold down **Q**, line up your nearest enemy on the radar, and press **Q** to kick the door in and start firing. Stay outside the room and just keep kicking the door in and blowing a head or two off each time. Remember, to complete the mission you must bring the hunter's body from the guard tower to the guard's room.



Grainier than a home movie from the Sly Stallone Collection

LEVEL TWELVE: DOING TIME

Move toward the green dot and grab the hammer. A small band of hunters will then be released. As the instructions request, you must perform a level-2 and level-3 execution with the hammer. Don't be afraid of being seen here; it's easy to run away and find cover as the area is so large. Stretch the hunters out by running to different corners of the ward then take a few out at a time. You'll eventually have to repeat the above with a metal bat. Move through the door that Starkweather opens and grab the checkpoint. Lure some hunters down the stairs and take them out. You should now be able to swap the hammer for a pistol. Use your gun to take out anyone blocking your way up the stairs. After you've moved to the floor above, use the beds for cover while taking out the hunters with your pistol. Move into the shower block to complete the mission.

LEVEL THIRTEEN: KILL THE RABBIT

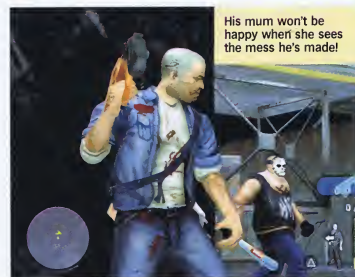
Yeehaa! It's time for another shotgun blast-a-thon. Carve up the first batch of hunters till you get to a shotgun-toting hunter behind a crate. Don't take him on, but instead duck into the adjacent doorway and flank him. Further on you'll come to the workshop. Hit the switch on the wall and find some cover. After dispatching the hunters, move a carcass onto the security panel. Now, you'll be outside. Use the crates and take out some more hunters. Creep up the tower and blow away the rabbit and the armoured guard behind him. Grab the sniper rifle and



We're lucky. Schoolkids in the US are certainly a wild breed



Paintball nuts sure have taken the sport to new levels!



His mum won't be happy when she sees the mess he's made!

pick off the other armoured guards that enter the prison grounds. Most move out from behind the truck near the prison exit. Also, watch for guards who come up into the tower. Make sure you've got a pistol handy to deal with them. Move through the prison gates.

LEVEL FOURTEEN: DIVIDED THEY FALL

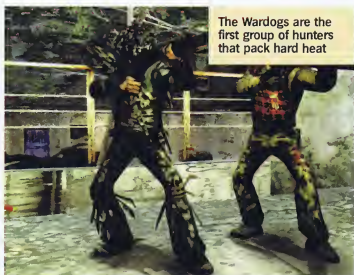
Initially, this level can seem tough but, provided you get off to the right start, it's no problem. Grab the wire and can then stealth your way into the dark eatery room. Hide in the close-left corner and lure all the area's hunters down here and to their doom. Now, with the shotgun, fight your way into the apartment block and all the way upstairs.



Avoid tackling more than one hunter at the same time



Never take on a pistol-toting foe head on. Take 'em from the rear



The Wardogs are the first group of hunters that pack hard heat



Use the walls as cover, and spring out to take down the hunters that charge and fire at you. You'll then be on a mission to gun down Ramirez. Grab the painkillers from the adjacent room (ignore the sniper rifle) and fight your way downstairs before the clock runs out. Check your radar to get the edge over the hunters. When you get out the front, Ramirez and two other shotgun-wielding hunters will be waiting for you. Take cover and blow them away. Move towards the gate, polishing off the remaining goons.

LEVEL FIFTEEN: PRESS COVERAGE

Make your way to the journalist's apartment building, dispatching police. Once inside you'll have to take on a dozen heavily armed officers. Take out the first few at the top of the stairs, then move in and take out the two through the door on the left. Walk through the glass doors and take out the cops in the second room. Move on and dodge the sight of the sniping police officer. Keep to the right and move into the casino. Work your way through the building, take the sniper out and use his rifle on the fuzz below. Swap back to the shotgun and work your way out of the casino and onto the street. On the left you'll see a building with a wall around it. Creep around the inside of the wall; climb over the mattress and up the flight of stairs. Take out the sniper and use his rifle to take out one or two police. Now move down into the subway.

LEVEL SIXTEEN: WRONG SIDE OF THE TRACKS

Hustle down the stairs, take some cover and polish off all the police in the area, making sure to acquire the sub-machinegun on the way. Blow the lock off the adjacent door and, keeping to the right, bolt hard along the wall past the incoming officers. Hide and take the guards out one or two at a time with your shotgun. Go through the doors on the left and take out the officers inside – spare no firepower for this. Find the control room and turn the train powers back on before bolting back onto the train. Keep moving through this new subway, taking out police. Watch out when you get to the first flight of stairs – a trolley will come charging down, smashing you if you're in its way. Keep on pushing forward as hard as you can. Use free aim to take out cops hiding behind cover if you can't get a lock on them.



Go for the level-3 executions to improve your rating



When springing out from cover, only fire one shot at a time

LEVEL SEVENTEEN: TRAINED TO KILL

Carve your way into Carcer Point Station then head outside and across the tracks before blowing the padlock off the next gate. Take out the next batch of heat then head into a large area laden with train carriages and police. While there are a lot of officers to deal with there's also a lot of cover. At the end of this area is a gate whose entrance is cordoned off with boxes. Two police have barricaded themselves in there. Shoot the gas canister at the front of the barricade, or attack from the side. Kill the cops who come charging through the opening after that by ducking behind the boxes and popping up to take them out. After all the police in this area are dead, climb the middle blue carriage and move on to the next blue carriage 20 metres ahead. Here you can drop down and pick up a sniper rifle. Return to the carriage's roof and take out all the cops in the next area with headshots.

LEVEL EIGHTEEN: BORDER PATROL

Grab the wire and bottle. Open the garage then bolt out to the left and hide behind the crates at the back. Use the wire to kill your first hunter and get a gun. Dispatch the rest, one at a time, around the back of the garage. Now, quietly move along, going left after acquiring the checkpoint in the large yard. Don't move toward the mansion yet. Entice a guard into the shadows, kill him with the glass shard and grab his assault rifle. This weapon is – by far – the best in the game; it can be used to take out scores of soldiers when you're behind cover.



Let this be a lesson for all: never fight in a sporting goods store



Try and go for headshots whenever you're able

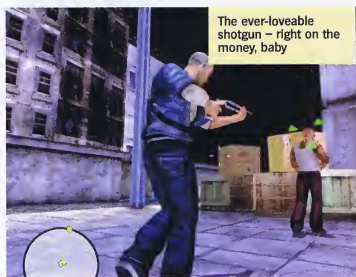


Bang on walls to lure enemies to their deserved doom

Move around to the right, and then through the maze (there's a checkpoint in the middle), taking out enemies as you go. Now, as you approach the mansion, keep out of the gaze of the snipers and move around to the right, down the stairs and to the cellar.

LEVEL NINETEEN: KEY PERSONNEL

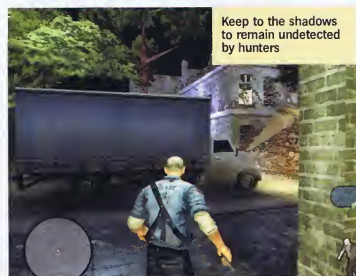
You've two objectives here: you've got to get to the west wing and turn the elevator power on, then you've got to acquire the elevator key from the leader of the Cerberus team. First off, know that the cellar is your friend. Lead all the nearby Cerberus members down here and wait for them to ascend the stairs back to their positions before



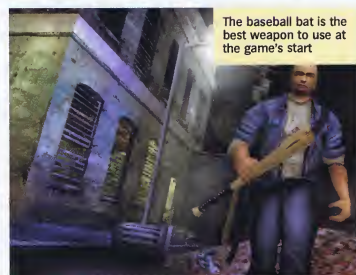
The ever-loveable shotgun – right on the money, baby



Looks like it is time for some toe-to-toe hammer lovin'



Keep to the shadows to remain undetected by hunters



The baseball bat is the best weapon to use at the game's start

firing on them with the assault rifle. Now, keep moving toward the dots on your radar while continuing to fall back to cover to take out incoming Cerberus. Also, shoot any cameras you spot. Enter the large room with the staircase and grab the checkpoint. Don't go up the stairs; instead go through the opposing door and down the spiral staircase. Carve your way through the grunts and find the elevator power board. Turn it back on. Move upstairs this time and take out the grunt in the surveillance room. Hit the switch at the side of the terminal to disable the cameras. Move to the Head of Security's doorway. Open the door, get a few shots off, then retreat. The grunts won't follow you out so you'll have to keep sticking your head in and taking out one grunt at a time. Grab the keys and painkillers. Go around the corner and get into the lift.

LEVEL TWENTY: DELIVERANCE

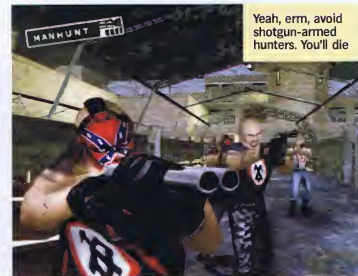
The grand finale! Sprint away from Piggy, grab one of the weapons lying around and hide in the shadows. Lure him nearby then hit him with an execution move from behind. Do this three times. Now, follow him up the stairs and throw a brick at his head. He'll bolt up the spiral staircase. Again, throw the brick at his head and stand on the other side of the meshed floor panel. He'll walk on it before retreating. Use the brick to get him back up there and walking on the panel one last time. Cerberus will now be dispatched after you. After losing them in the darkness, take one of them out with your chainsaw and use his assault rifle to take out the rest. Now, use the chainsaw to break into Starkweather's room and dice the mastermind to pieces like sloppy pizza topping! ▶



A losing contestant from Australian Idol comes for revenge



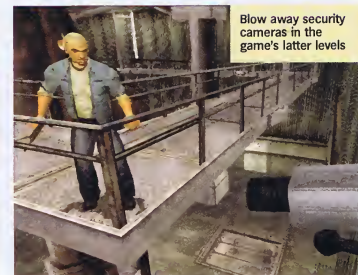
They might look tough, but they bleed – so you can kill them



Yeah, erm, avoid shotgun-armed hunters. You'll die



This scene is not a good one for James to come across



Blow away security cameras in the game's latter levels

NEED SOME GOALS IN YOUR LIFE?

FIFA SOCCER 2004

Expert advice and techniques that'll turn you into the next Mark Viduka in no time!

PRACTISE MAKES PERFECT

It might seem ridiculously obvious, but the best place to start honing your skills is out on the training pitch. Even if you've played previous versions of FIFA, this is the place to get to grips with the spiffy new features of the game without the pressure of 11 burly men bearing down on you all the time.

Most importantly, don't try too much too soon. Leave the "off-the-ball" controls well alone until you've got a good feel for the basics. Try shooting from different areas and see which proves most effective. Also, use this time to get to know your players. If you haven't got a Zidane or a Beckham in the team, keep the passing nice and short and use long balls sparingly. Without a deadly long-ball passer in your team, hoofing it up field will usually result in lost possession.

OFF THE BALL

Once you're knocking the ball about with ease and have a good feel for the strengths and weaknesses of your players, it's time to get intimate with the off-the-ball plays. By pressing the off-the-ball button, you'll highlight icons above three players. If you tap it again, you'll individually cycle through each of them. Once you've chosen the player in the best position to pass to, it's time to tell him where to run to receive the ball.

By tapping the right analogue stick in the direction you want the player to run, you'll make him sprint off in that direction. Always try to make him run into space and away from his marker. That way, you can play the ball into space ahead of him and make the most of this new technique. It's a great addition to your repertoire, especially when looking to cross into the box. Being able to pick out the player you want means you can launch a pinpoint-accurate ball right onto his diving head or swinging boot.

However, be careful not to spend too much time looking at the men around you, lest you forget you're still got to keep hold of the ball yourself. There are times to use off-the-ball passing and times to keep it simple. The

best time to use this new-fangled technique is when trying to cross the ball in. Trying to use it when you're around a congested penalty box, on the other hand, is not so smart. In such situations, stick to short passes and defence-splitting through-balls.

SET PIECES

Beckham didn't become a free-kick god without years of practice. Likewise, you too will have to practise your free kicks for all those crucial opportunities that arise in the dying moments of a game. You can practice set pieces until your eyes go square in the training mode.

While it's easier to score if you've got stellar players like Ronaldo, Beckham or Henry in your team, we've managed to produce some hints that should help you burst that net more times than not – regardless of which player is taking the shot.

Always put curl on the ball. It's essential to get the ball to bend around the defensive wall. If the player is left-footed, use left-side curl and vice versa. Never do it the opposite way around. Making Beckham curl the ball to the left with the outside of his boot is a complete waste of time and will see the shot missed more often than not. A little bit of spin under the ball will also help to get it over the wall and dip towards goal. Most importantly of all is the power. Don't be tempted to rocket each one at full strength, it'll just end up smacking that poor bloke at the top of the stand in the face. Try to aim for just over halfway along the power bar, at about 60 to 65 per cent, and watch that keeper lunge at thin air.

DEFENDING

Never, ever drag players out of position. Try to pass the ball out from goal rather than kick it. This way, you can build up play to your design without the lottery of a big boot into the sky. Once it's at your defender's feet, bring it forward a bit, but never too far up the pitch. The minute you lose possession, your defence will be left with a huge, gaping hole. Take things slowly, lay the ball off to one of

your more creatively gifted midfielders and rely on them to make that killer pass.

BUILD-UP PLAY

You can basically break down your build-up play into two styles: Playing it through the middle and trying to pick out your front men with a killer through-ball, or playing it out to the wings and firing in some wicked crosses. If you've got a lanky beanpole up front, there's a good chance he'll win plenty of headers, so play to his strengths by providing plenty of crosses. If, on the other hand, you've got Michael Owen up front, use his exceptional pace by getting him to run onto through-balls played into space.

ATTACKING

Always keep your cool. Never rush your opportunities. You've got to work damn hard for openings so make the most of them when they come. Don't shoot from too far out – it's bread and butter for the keeper to pluck them out of the air. If you've got a mid-fielder with good long-shooting ability, unleash pile-driving power shots when you're close to the edge of the box. If you're one-on-one with the keeper, wait for him to rush out at you then make a subtle change of direction at the last moment. Now simply caress the shoot button to place it into the corner. Never go for power over accuracy. Always keep your calm and aim for the corners.

SPRINTING

It's vital that you use the sprint button sparingly. The minute you start to run quickly, the further the ball moves away from your player. It's under less control and your player can't react as quickly to the opposition. Nine times out of 10, running for a sustained period will result in you losing the ball. Only use it in short bursts, just to get that extra bit of space or to pull away from a defender. Only the wingers should employ the sprint button for longer periods when they've got space ahead of them down the touchline. Remember, the more you sprint, the more tired your players will become towards the end of the game. This lessens their on-field effectiveness when attacking and defending tactics and formations.

Always start out with the tried and tested 4-4-2 formation. If it's good enough for Manchester United, it's good enough for all of us. It's the most balanced setup you can have – a solid back four, a strong midfield and two decent attackers. From here you can develop your game and change things to suit your style. It's simple, really, just analyse where the problems are and make the appropriate changes.

If you find that you're letting in too many goals, change to five at the back and one up front for a 5-4-1 formation. If you're dominating play but not getting enough goals, try 4-3-3 to beef up your attack. If you're struggling to keep hold of the ball in midfield, concentrate on the wings. Throw the ball out to your central defenders and immediately pass the ball to the full back. Hug the touchline and try to get it to your winger. Now he can peg it up the channel, avoiding the hard tacklers in the middle of the park, and stick in a deadly cross that will hopefully be met by the head of one of your strikers.

Conversely, if you haven't got much pace in your midfield, and thus no one who could really be called a winger, concentrate on playing through the middle and utilising your team's passing skills with a 4-1-2-1-2 formation. The man just in front of the defence should have good defensive abilities, such as tackling and marking, while the man just behind the strikers should have sensational creativity with good passing, ball control,



Passing play is vitally important in FIFA 2004 – master it immediately



Keep the ball close to your feet when surrounded. No sprinting!

awareness and skill attributes. Remember, always play to your team's strengths.

When choosing your formation, the most important thing to consider is the ability of your players. There's not much point concentrating on your defence if you're playing as Real Madrid. With so many gifted attacking players, you should simply play to their strengths, which is going forward. However, if you find yourself at a club like Portsmouth, it might prove beneficial to pack your defence and play the direct ball game. With someone as classy as Sheringham up front, get the ball to him as quickly as possible because he's far and away your best player.

ADVANCED TACTICS

When you're feeling comfortable with the basics and find yourself winning most games, it's probably time to really hammer home your superiority. Now's the time to go for broke and choose formations with three at the back and far more attacking options up front. It might leave you a little exposed, but three good central defenders should be able to keep most strikers in check.

The 3-4-3 formation will give you loads of attacking options, with your three strikers keeping their defence extremely busy, two wingers to provide the ammunition from the touchlines, and two solid midfielders to win the ball back in the middle of the pitch.

However, if you've got a real footballing genius in your ranks, such as Zidane, Totti, Scholes or Rivaldo, play him in the hole just behind the two strikers with a 3-4-1-2 formation. This enables him to stay just out of reach of the opposition's marking defenders but also in a great position to receive the ball from your two central midfielders. From here, they can try to thread that killer pass to your front men. Alternatively, you could spray the ball out wide to your wingers and make a late run into the box to provide extra shooting options.

CAREER MODE

The first thing to do is calm down and try not to spend all your cash at once. It's tempting to dive in and spend everything on getting Kewell to sign for your team, but it might not prove a good move in the long term. Not every club can do a Chelsea and buy everything with two legs, so take your time and play a few games with the squad you've inherited. Trawl through the stats and check for the players with the worst skills in their particular position.

The key areas to look for depend on that player's position. Check out the following lists and remember there are some skills that might not seem important at first, but could prove to be the vital ingredient over a whole season. Defenders with low aggression will have a much smaller chance of being sent off when they miss-time a tackle. Midfielders with good stamina and strength will prove extremely useful in the last 10 minutes of games when everyone is a bit tired. Attackers with good awareness will make much more intelligent runs into space and lose their markers more frequently.

DEFENDERS

- Awareness
- Heading
- Marking
- Tackling
- Strength

DEFENSIVE MIDFIELDERS

- Marking
- Passing
- Tackling
- Stamina
- Strength

ATTACKING MIDFIELDERS

- Awareness
- Long ball
- Passing
- Skill
- Shot power

WINGERS

- Balance
- Ball control
- Dribbling
- Pace
- Stamina

STRIKERS

- Awareness
- Balance
- Ball control
- Dribbling
- Shot accuracy



CODE-U-LIKE

Need to cheat your way to victory on a certain game? Here are the codes you should use.

JAK II: RENEGADE

(SLES 51608)

Dark Jak vs final boss

After the cut-scene before the final battle, hold **(X)** and you'll transform (or stay as) Dark Jak, regardless of how full your Dark Eco meter is.

Free vehicle hit

If you are angry for whatever reason at the Krimzon Guard, and want to make them mad, but you don't want to get killed for it, then complete these steps:

- 1 - Get a Zoomer (they're the small fast little vehicles).
- 2 - Go full speed, aiming towards a guard.
- 3 - Right before you hit him, press **(A)** to jump off the Zoomer.
- 4 - If you do it right, the vehicle will smash into him and he will receive damage, but no alarms will be raised.

Infinite Orbs

For any Underground Orb mission, if you grab the Orb at exactly 0:00, you'll get a "Mission Failed", but also collect the three Orbs. If you choose to try again, you can do this over and over and keep getting three more Orbs.

MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE

(SLES 51954)

Enter this code during gameplay:

All modes unlocked

(X), (O), (X), (O), (X), (O), (X), (O), (X), (O), (X), (O)

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

(SLES 51702)

Fly With Starbuck and Apollo as Wingmen

In the extras section of the menu, make sure you start from the top of the list and enter this code swiftly (in less than five seconds). If you hear a Cylon voice saying "By Your Command" the code has been entered correctly.

↓, ↓, ←, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, →

BATMAN: RISE OF SIN Tzu

(SLES 51756)

At the "Press Start" screen with Sin Tzu and Batman, hold down **(X)+(X)+(X)+(X)** and enter the following combinations:

All characters at 100 per cent

↑, →, ←, ←, →, →, ↓, ↓

Infinite Combo Bar

←, →, ↑, ↓, →, ←, ↓, ↑

Infinite health

↑, →, ↓, ←, ↑, ←, ↓, →

Unlock Dark Knight difficulty level

↓, ←, →, ↑, ↑, →, ←, ↓

Unlock everything

↓, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↑, ←, →, ←, →

COMMANDOS 2

(SLES TBC)

You can use the following passwords to unlock missions. You can also unlock bonus missions by collecting all of the brown bonus books during the course of a mission. This will complete a photograph and unlock a brand-new bonus mission.

Mission 1 (Hard)

PLKUM

Mission 2 (Hard)

JE5SH

Mission 3 (Hard)

DFY3B

Mission 4 (Hard)

K9D3H

Mission 5 (Hard)

NMWQ9

Mission 6 (Hard)

16G3L

Mission 7 (Hard)

WL3CZ

Mission 8 (Hard)

LPQ6T

Mission 9 (Hard)

SRCM8

Mission 10 (Hard)

PAEN8

Mission 1 (Normal)

XHGDR

Mission 2 (Normal)

WKUC4

Mission 3 (Normal)

YSM51

Mission 4 (Normal)

B7D8F

Mission 5 (Normal)

3GHSL

Mission 6 (Normal)

AZLM1

Mission 7 (Normal)

JAHSG

Mission 8 (Normal)

UN63A

Mission 9 (Normal)

VAZ2P

Mission 10 (Normal)

9TT5W

NAVAL OPS: WARSHIP GUNNER

(SLES 51893)

This code is performed on the main ship screen. The one that shows the currently selected ship at dock.

Unlimited money

←, ←, →, →, (X), (X), (X), (X), (O), (O)

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON

(SLES 51916)

Special game modes

To unlock the Survival Mode, mini-games, game films, and movie clips, simply beat the game with any ending.

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

(SLES 51794)

Duck Danger costume

DANGERD

Big fish to hit enemies with

SLAPPY

Hen grenade attack

HENSAWY

KYA: DARK LINEAGE

(SLES TBC)

At the Main Menu enter these codes:

Open Bonus Gallery

(X), ↑, (O), →, ↓, ↓, (O), ←

Restore life

(X), (X), (X), (X), ↑, ↑, ←, (O), →, (O), (X)

Shrink Jamgut

(X), (X), (O), (X), (X), (X), ←, (X), (X)

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PIN	GAME	CHEAT
17071	Secret Weapons Over Normandy	Infinite Ammo
17072	Secret Weapons Over Normandy	Invulnerability
17551	Finding Nemo	Bonus Level
17552	Finding Nemo	End Credits
17553	Finding Nemo	God Mode
17554	Finding Nemo	Level Select
10641	Gladius	Equip Anything
10541	Midnight Club II	All Locations
10542	Midnight Club II	All Cars
10543	Midnight Club II	Unlock All
14741	Blood Rayne	God Mode
14742	Blood Rayne	Fill Bloodlust
14743	Blood Rayne	Time Factor
14744	Blood Rayne	Level Select
14745	Blood Rayne	Enemy Freeze
14746	Blood Rayne	Show Weapons
14747	Blood Rayne	Gratuitous Dismemberment
14748	Blood Rayne	Jumpy
15081	The Hulk	Play as Gray Hulk
15082	The Hulk	Invincibility
15083	The Hulk	Level Select
15084	The Hulk	Regenerator
15085	The Hulk	Unlimited Continues
15086	The Hulk	Double Health for Enemies
15087	The Hulk	Double Health for Hulk
15088	The Hulk	Half Enemies HP
10171	Scoby-Dool Night of 100 Frights	All Power-Ups
10172	Scoby-Dool Night of 100 Frights	All Warp Gates
10173	Scoby-Dool Night of 100 Frights	All FMV Sequences
10174	Scoby-Dool Night of 100 Frights	Alternate Credits
12721	Shaun Murray: Wakeboarding	Master Code
12722	Shaun Murray: Wakeboarding	All Boards
12723	Shaun Murray: Wakeboarding	All Gags
12724	Shaun Murray: Wakeboarding	Level Select
12131	World of Outlaws SprintCars	Money
12132	World of Outlaws SprintCars	All Drivers
12133	World of Outlaws SprintCars	All Tracks
03971	Prisoner of War	Unlimited Goodies
03972	Prisoner of War	All Characters
12271	Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness	Level Skip
13471	Die Hard Vendetta	Invincibility
13472	Die Hard Vendetta	Flame On
13473	Die Hard Vendetta	Unlud Metal Textures
13474	Die Hard Vendetta	Bkg. Heads
13475	Die Hard Vendetta	Small Heads
13476	Die Hard Vendetta	Explosive Fists
15811	Dead to Rights	10,000 Bullets
15812	Dead to Rights	All Disarms Open
15813	Dead to Rights	Endless Armour
15814	Dead to Rights	Level Select
15815	Dead to Rights	Invincibility
15816	Dead to Rights	Invincibility
07711	Blood Omen 2	Weapons and Armour
04281	MX Superfly	All Bikes
04282	MX Superfly	All Riders
04283	MX Superfly	All Tracks
04284	MX Superfly	Unlock Everything
13111	Spongebob Squarepants	Level Select
08261	Star Wars: The Clone Wars	Invincibility
08262	Star Wars: The Clone Wars	Skip Level
08263	Star Wars: The Clone Wars	Cantabain Level Select
04801	Aggressive Inline	All Levels
04802	Aggressive Inline	All Secret Characters
04803	Aggressive Inline	Super Skin
18720	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Unlock All Levels
18721	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Unlock Max Ammo
18732	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Bullet Shield Mode
18733	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Snlner Mode
18734	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Silver Bullet Mode
20171	LOTR: The Return of the King	1000 Experience Points for Aragorn
20172	LOTR: The Return of the King	1000 Experience Points for Frodo
20173	LOTR: The Return of the King	1000 Experience Points for Gandalf
20174	LOTR: The Return of the King	1000 Experience Points for Gimli
20175	LOTR: The Return of the King	1000 Experience Points for Legolas
20176	LOTR: The Return of the King	1000 Experience Points for Sam
17531	True Crime: Streets of LA	All Drivn Unrtrades
17532	True Crime: Streets of LA	All Flehting Moves
17533	True Crime: Streets of LA	All Gunfay Skills
17534	True Crime: Streets of LA	Imvulnerable Garage Cars Unlocked
18971	Simpsons Hit & Run	All Reward Cars
18972	Simpsons Hit & Run	Infinite Car Health
18973	Simpsons Hit & Run	Faster Cars
18974	Simpsons Hit & Run	Jumping Car
18975	Simpsons Hit & Run	Blow up Vehicles In one Hit
18976	Simpsons Hit & Run	Night Time Mode
19671	NFS: Underground	Unlock all Drag Tracks
19672	NFS: Underground	Unlock all Drift Tracks
19673	NFS: Underground	Unlock all Circuit Tracks
19674	NFS: Underground	Unlock all Sprint Tracks
20177	LOTR: The Return of the King	All Unrtrades
20178	LOTR: The Return of the King	Always Devasting
20179	LOTR: The Return of the King	Invulnerable
20180	LOTR: The Return of the King	Invulnerable
20181	LOTR: The Return of the King	Perfect Mode
20182	LOTR: The Return of the King	Restore Health
18481	Tony Hawk's Underground	Faster Speed
18482	Tony Hawk's Underground	Moon Gravity
18483	Tony Hawk's Underground	Perfect Manuals
18484	Tony Hawk's Underground	Perfect Rail Balance
18485	Tony Hawk's Underground	Unlocks All Thug Movies

gamestation

Your definitive guide to the ever expanding library of PlayStation 2 games.

So you've just bought a PlayStation 2, and you're confronted by a dauntingly huge line-up of games to choose from at your local gaming store. Now what?

GameStation is OPS2's one-stop guide to getting an idea of what's hot and what's not. As time goes on and new games come out, we drop some of the older games that don't warrant being remembered, replacing them with newer games that score well in the reviews section.

As PlayStation 2 owners we really are spoiled for choice. There are a massive choice of AAA quality games – many of which are bound to fall under your radar. OPS2 is here to make sure that not too many of them manage to slip through your fingers.

If you just want to find the best of the best, look for the games that receive a Bronze, Silver or Gold award. Enjoy your search.

GLOSSARY

Just got your PS2? It's your first console ever and you've bought the best magazine to give the latest and most up-to-date information but don't have a clue what we're going on about? Well, without wanting to patronise those gamers who've been around since the Atari 2600 by spelling out the meaning of gaming terms and acronyms in the reviews and previews, here's your 'at a glance' guide to all things PS2 and technical.

Afterburn: An extra kick of power in flight sims.

AI: Artificial Intelligence.

Analogue: Re: Dual Shock 2. Registering degrees of input, as opposed to digital's on/off status.

Boards: Snowboards or games featuring the alpine sport.

Co-op: Co-operative arcade videogames.

Cut-scene: Explanatory, non-playable scene in videogame (also FMV).

CPU: Central Processor Unit. Brains of PS2.

Dev kits: Programmable PS2s used by developers.

D-pad: Direction pad on PS2 controller.

Dual Shock controller: Controller for PSone.

Dual Shock 2: Controller designed for PS2 (with analogue).

ECTS: European Computer Trade Show.

E3: Electronic Entertainment Expo (US).

Frame rate: Number of images drawn per second in games. Higher frame rate = smoother animation.

FPS: First-Person Shooter (eg Quake III).

Hack 'n' slash: Refers to game (usually fantasy) featuring blade combat.

High res: High resolution (graphics).

HUD: Head Up Display.

Screen furniture: Such as map, speedometer, etc.

Iconography: Graphical shorthand defining game, genre etc.

Low res: Refers to poor quality graphics.

L3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's left joystick.

Mini-games: Bonus, playable games found in larger titles.

Polygon: Building block of videogame graphics.

PSone: The precursor to PS2. If you don't know what this is then frankly there's no hope for you.

Real-time: When one second of game time equals one second in the real world.

RPG: Role-playing game.

RTS: Real-time strategy.

R3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's right joystick.

Sims: Simulation.

Strafe: Move sideways while looking straight.

USB: Port to connect peripherals such as keyboard to PS2.

"If there's a term, word or phrase that's still taxing your brain cells, let us know and we'll include it here."

007 NIGHTFIRE	Bronze	OVERALL 06
Aside from the occasionally iffy AI this has enough variety to make a solid single player game and the multiplayer gives it longevity.		
7 PLACES	Bronze	OVERALL 06
Tunga-styled adventure with a healthy dose of chop-socky gameplay.		
18 WHEELER	Bronze	OVERALL 06
Brash, chunky and colourful truck racer. Unfortunately it just doesn't offer enough substance to satisfy the hardened gamer.		
2002 FIFA WORLD CUP	Bronze	OVERALL 07
The World Cup version of FIFA 2002 with more pizzazz, nifty effects for star players and a serious challenge at the highest difficulty level, but sadly lacking in game modes.		
ACE COMBAT: DISTANT THUNDER	Bronze	OVERALL 07
Best Ace Combat yet. A graphically-polished flight sim with a variety of missions. Best with a flight-stick of some kind.		
AFL LIVE 2004	Bronze	OVERALL 06
Plays a better game of footy, but it's not a vast improvement over its predecessor.		
AGGRESSIVE INLINE	Bronze	OVERALL 06
There's more than enough inline action to keep you impressed and entertained until the next Tony Hawk says, "Buy me, dude!"		
AIRBLADE	Bronze	OVERALL 06
Irradiate visuals, sublime handling, massive a/s – everything you could want hoardingboard to be. Back to the future anyone?		
ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2002	Bronze	OVERALL 07
An enjoyable all-round game of baseball with oodles of depth, and surprisingly compelling to watch as well as to play.		
AMPLITUDE	Bronze	OVERALL 06
An addictive mixture of reflexes and music timing. Weak graphics, but great gameplay.		
AQUA AQUA: METRIX 2.0	Bronze	OVERALL 07
Addictive, well-realised update of the N64 puzzler Metrix. Essentially it's Tetris with water. Weird, but worthwhile.		
ARC THE LAD: TWILIGHT OF THE SPIRITS	Bronze	OVERALL 07
It isn't original, but Arc the Loe is a welcome addition to the list of next-generation RPGs.		
ARMORED CORE 2	Bronze	OVERALL 07
Infinately-bearable first-person mech shooter. Not for the casual gamer after a quick fix, but perfect for those who love their sims.		
ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK: BLADE'S REVENGE	Bronze	OVERALL 02
Very dull helicopter game. Hardly surprising from arguably the worst series of games to grace a console.		
ARMY MEN: GREEN ROUGE	Bronze	OVERALL 01
On rail shooter that manages to sink to new depths of soldiering tedium. Avoid at all costs.		
ATV OFFROAD FURY 2	Bronze	OVERALL 06
More of the same, with new tracks, riders, racing modes and plenty of good old fashioned fun.		
AUTO MODELISTA	Bronze	OVERALL 06
The low-cost of ice-shaded graphics and Gen Turism. Despite its cartoony appearance, this is a fairly serious racing game.		
BACKWARD WRESTLING: DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME	Bronze	OVERALL 06
When they titled this brawler Don't Try This At Home – did they mean the game?		
BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE	Bronze	OVERALL 08
Play D&D on a console! Quite simplistic and arcadey, but this is still a great RPG that adds nicely to the PS2's line up.		

YOUR KEY TO SHORTLIST

GOLD
Only for games that scored the elusive 10/10.

SILVER
Awarded to games with a mighty 9/10.

BRONZE
Given to games that scored an impressive 8/10.

SMALLER LEVELS, FEWER WEAPONS

Games you must play if you're a fan of the sequel runs them. But be quick.



This is normally the bit where we recommend you rush out and play Spy Hunter before the recently released Spy Hunter 2 makes it redundant. Unfortunately, in Spy Hunter's case the sequel is one of these rare games where the developer tripped over its laces and came up with something lacking any of the charm or style of the original. We used to seem like follow-ups in the world of movies, but in gaming it's hard not to improve on the prequel. Usually, just taking the last game, throwing in a couple of new moves and adding some slightly slicker graphics is enough to make for a better, if not original, game. Stick to the original because Spy Hunter 2 is firing blanks.

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL	Bronze	OVERALL 08
Compelling and original. It manages to cross multiple genres and is bizarre, unlike and engaging all at once.		
BLOODBORN	Bronze	OVERALL 06
Bloodborne is an explosion of sex, action and violence. It's not going to tax your mind but it's so much fun you won't care.		
BOMBERMAN KART	Bronze	OVERALL 07
As much fun as four people can have with fifty bucks. It's worth it just for the original 2D Bomberman.		
BUFFY 2: CHADS BLOODS	Bronze	OVERALL 07
Full of action and adventure, Choccs Bloods is a worthy addition to the Buffy legacy.		
BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT	Bronze	OVERALL 08
An even more intense racing experience than its predecessor. The Fast & the Furious in a video game.		
CASTLEVANIA: LAMENT OF INNOCENCE	Silver	OVERALL 09
Better whip and dungeon action than Larry Macrowitz's last all-nighter at the Hellfire Club.		
CLUB FOOTBALL	Bronze	OVERALL 06
The second best soccer game on PS2. Superior to the FIFA games but PES still rives it a thrashing.		
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 4	Silver	OVERALL 09
One for experts and newbies alike, Colin 4 is a superlative rally sim with a tank full of fun.		
COMMANDOS 2	Bronze	OVERALL 06
A daunting but extremely worthy and rewarding strategy game where the player controls a team of operatives in WWII missions.		
CONFLICT: DESERT STORM II	Bronze	OVERALL 06
It's not perfect, but it improves on its predecessor by a long shot. War may be hell but this certainly isn't.		
CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER	Bronze	OVERALL 07
A fantastic trip down memory lane for old school veterans, but Contra may confuse or confound the contemporary gamer.		
CRASH NITRO KART	Bronze	OVERALL 06
With a little spit and polish, CNK could have been in pole position, but its faults leave it lagging behind.		
CRAZY TAXI	Bronze	OVERALL 06
Arcade thrills aplenty in this no-holds-barred city-smashing racer. If you want speed, buy this now.		
CRICKET 2004	Bronze	OVERALL 07
Howzat! Not outstanding. Comes close to being great, but falls short due to the inherited flaws of Cricket 2002.		
DANCING STAGE MEGAMIX	Bronze	OVERALL 07
Top swanky disco fun, named by a flimsy selection of songs. All together now – big fish, little fish, cardboard box.		
DARK CHRONICLE	Silver	OVERALL 09
If you've finished FFX and need a new fix, look no further. This is top-tier RPG fare, an essential purchase.		
DEAD TO RIGHTS	Bronze	OVERALL 07
Near endless gunplay with hand-to-hand scrapping, backed up with a dark tale. DTR is good, mindless fun.		
DEF JAM VENEDICTA	Bronze	OVERALL 08
Some more options would have made this a true champion, but it's still a worthy contender. Smackdown watch out!		
DEUS EX	Silver	OVERALL 09
The thinking man's action shooter and genre-busting game that redefines expectations. Superb.		



DEVIL MAY CRY ★ OVERALL 09
Melding battling with lush surroundings and a superb gothic atmosphere. One of the best PS2 games yet! Definitely.

DEVIL MAY CRY 2 ★ OVERALL 08
Devil-huns may cry at the new direction, but there's still enough gorgeous style and firearms in DM2 to satisfy action junkies.

DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE ★ OVERALL 06
Gene warfare and confusing puzzles abound in this bizarre manga adventure.

DOWNHILL DOMINATION OVERALL 07
Downhill Domination is a fine extreme racer that should appeal to all daredevil freaks.

DOG'S LIFE OVERALL 07
This canine caper is an inspired look at the adventure genre that will keep you more entertained than a dog four balls.

DROPSHIP: UNITED FORCE PEACE ★ OVERALL 06
Impressive combat sim that rewards commitment with paced and varied gameplay.

DYNASTY TACTICS 2 OVERALL 02
Dynasty Tactics 2 is purely one for the more masochistic strategy guru. You know who you are.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: XTREME LEGENDS OVERALL 07
Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends is strictly one for the beat-'em-up fans. Just don't call it mindless.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4 OVERALL 07
Dynasty Warriors 4 is an accomplished title, but due to its lack of innovation, it's unlikely to get many pulses racing.

ENDGAME ★ OVERALL 09
Sets a new standard in the lightgun shooter genre. Innovative, refreshing and most of all, a tonne of fun.

ENTER THE MATRIX OVERALL 07
Despite a painful lack of depth ETM is an enjoyable package for anyone after another dose of Matrix mayhem.

ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND ★ OVERALL 06
Adventure that includes smart visuals, witty script and intelligent puzzles.

ESPN NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT OVERALL 06
Other hockey sims on the market with better gameplay put this in the sin bin.

ESPN NBA BASKETBALL ★ OVERALL 08
ESPN NBA Basketball slam dunks the competition with its slick presentation and innovative modes.

ESPN NFL FOOTBALL ★ OVERALL 09
If this game's quality was put into a local game, the results would be incredible. Until then, so for the stars and stripes.

ESPN NHL HOCKEY ★ OVERALL 09
A fast flowing game with plenty of depth. A no-brainer for hockey fans but a still a solid game for everyone else.

EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES OVERALL 07
EverQuest Online Adventures offers rewards for the persistent, but it can be a pretty tough slog getting there.

EVL TWIN OVERALL 05
Adventure from the dark side of platforming. Average, so-so animation with 76 levels of twisted plot.

EXTERMINATION OVERALL 07
Alien-inspired survival horror-fest that is set in a deserted Antarctic research base. Politically crawling with cool design innovations.

EXTREME G 3 ★ OVERALL 06
A neon beast of a future bike racer that requires skill and brains. Takes some inspiration from the Wii-out series.

EYE TOY: PLAY ★ OVERALL 06
Forget the fact that it's marketed at casual gamers: give it a try, because when it comes to Eye Toy, serious is believing.

EYE TOY: CHOOCH OVERALL 06
Groove is a victim of the diversity of its predecessor. The lack of variety offered by this dancing title undoubtedly narrows its appeal.

F1 CAREER CHALLENGE OVERALL 07
At last, an F1 game that makes a priority of excitement and thrills over worthy but dull simulation.

FANTAVISION OVERALL 05
The world's first fireworks game. Not enormous, but of rare and random beauty.

FIFA FOOTBALL 2004 OVERALL 07
The best FIFA yet but it's miles behind PES3. It has all the bells and whistles, but the gameplay is still lacking.

FINAL FANTASY X ★ OVERALL 09
Nothing else needs to be said about this brilliant RPG. A classic Square adventure with next-gen presentation and production.

FINAL FANTASY X-2 ★ OVERALL 09
FFX-2 is a huge, sprawling RPG adventure that is well worth the attention of even the most casual fan.

FORMULA ONE 2003 ★ OVERALL 08
Another F1 cover all the drivers, tracks and cars included. Load it up and feel the speed. Feel the need for speed.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS ★ OVERALL 09
Slight imperfections are swamped by an utterly addictive and clever game experience. You must play this.

FUTURAMA OVERALL 06
With a bit more of polish this could have been shinier than Bender's metal ass.

FUR FIGHTERS ★ OVERALL 06
Cute fluffy creatures armed to the teeth with shotguns blast each other to pieces. The toy cupboard will never look innocent again.

GHOSTHUNTER 2 ★ OVERALL 06
It doesn't quite live up to its (huge) potential but it's original, scary, exciting and well worth a look.

GHOST RECON OVERALL 07
A squad-based first person shooter that suffers from a cumbersome interface for ordering troops about, often degenerating into arcade-style run-and-gun games.

GRANES: SILENT KAPOU OVERALL 06
The Heaper might be cool, but loading times hamper this port of a complex PC battle game.

GIAROO MAN ★ OVERALL 06
If you have a PS2 collection, you should definitely have at least one game like this in there! Check it out.

GLOBAL TOURING CHALLENGE: AFRICA OVERALL 07
An impressive racer that is further filled by clever use of interesting locations.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 3 ★ OVERALL 10
Not quite as good as its neon-soaked, '80s prequel but it's still fantastic fun and can now be found for bargain prices.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY ★ OVERALL 10
Better than GTA 3. Cars, crooks, coke, and chaos with total freedom to do what you want. A must have for any gamer serious or not.

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC ★ OVERALL 09
If you didn't know already, GT3 is the greatest racing game in the world. Speed down to the store and buy it now.

GRAN TURISMO CONCEPT: 2002 TOKYO-GENEVA ★ OVERALL 06
A more accessible version of GTA with concept cars. Perfect for those who just want to race, rather than play mechanic.

GREGORY HORROR SHOW ★ OVERALL 08
A truly ghoulish treat for fans of the survival horror genre who fancy something a little different.

GUMBALL 3000 OVERALL 03
A decidedly crap racing title that fails to deliver on all fronts. Not a must-play to bother with considering how many other decent racers are about.

G-SUMERS OVERALL 07
Futuristic racer that's improved by an innovative track editor.

GUILTY GEAR X ★ OVERALL 06
Pushes hard at beat-'em-up boundaries. The start of a new wave of next-gen 2D fighters.

GUINIGAVE OVERALL 06
Bizarre hunk inspired shooting game with gorgeous visuals, but a distinct lack of depth to back up all that eye candy.

GUN GRIFTON BLAZE OVERALL 07
A mesh shooter for robot obsessive-types everywhere.



1. LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING
It's side-by-side brawling in a game that packs in all of the movie's action.

2. SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE
Voiced by all the movie's actors and featuring more web-swinging than you could ever get sick of. A must-play!

3. ENTER THE MATRIX
The Wachowski Brothers went the extra mile and weaved the game's plot into the movie's.

4. JAMES BOND: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING
The new third-person perspective allows the game to feel much more like a Bond movie than any game yet!

5. THE THING
The movie may be getting old but this is survival horror with a nasty bite.

HALF-LIFE ★ OVERALL 09
The award-winning PC first-person shooter/adventure arrives on PS2 in resplendent form. An essential purchase.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS ★ OVERALL 08
Simple puzzles and gorgeous graphics make this a winner for younger fans of the books and films.

HARRY POTTER: QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP OVERALL 07
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup is an entertainingly original title, but lacking in variety and challenge.

HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN ★ OVERALL 09
A disturbingly realistic take on living the life of a hired killer. Not one for the squeamish, but it contains brilliant moments.

HUNTER: THE RECKONING WAYWARD OVERALL 07
It lacks any real uniqueness but looks good and plays well enough to be forgiven.

INDIANA JONES & THE EMPEROR'S TOMB OVERALL 07
High adventure 3D platform game let down by some unfortunate technical issues.

INIMIA OVERALL 07
Wale + Ningo is packed with varied gameplay, its original elements are largely superfluous. Worth a rent thought.

JAK & REINEGADE ★ OVERALL 10
Darker and more challenging than its predecessor, Jak II is the best platform game we've ever seen!

JAK AND Daxter: THE REISUROR LEGACY ★ OVERALL 09
A brilliant platformer from the makers of Crash Bandicoot that introduces two heroes you'll be seeing a lot more of.

JAMES BOND: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING ★ OVERALL 06
Looks and plays just like the films. Maybe a little too Metal Gear Solid-like but it's perfect popcorn action.

JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH ★ OVERALL 08
A nice tightrope that the multiplayer modes and arcade missions keep Dredd off of jail.

JURASSIC PARK: PROJECT GENESIS OVERALL 07
A prehistoric premise, sure. But Operation Genesis puts a fresh spin on the God sim game. Hammond would be proud.

KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO OVERALL 06
A paladin-on training mode makes up for this smart ninja fighters otherwise rather limited nature.

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER ★ OVERALL 06
A bit too serious to foxy howl for our liking, but still the best surfing game around.

KILLSWITCH OVERALL 07
As third-person shooters go, it's quite a lot of fun. Just don't go in expecting the next Splinter Cell.

KINGDOM HEARTS ★ OVERALL 08
A beautifully polished RPG with Disney and Square characters. Don't let the kiddo vibe fool you, this one's very tough.

KUNIOA 2: LUNATA'S VEIL ★ OVERALL 06
Cute and cheerful platform featuring the lovable glove-eared blue cat-rabbit hybrid. Fun stuff.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001 OVERALL 06
A more-than-competent boxing sim. Not a match for Rocky though.

KYL: DARK LINEAGE OVERALL 07
A well-rounded platforming experience. Missing a few bells and whistles but very respectable fun.

LARGO VINCHI OVERALL 05
Based on a French comic character, this spy game is too linear, and lacks the interactivity that is needed to maintain a game's attention.

LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFERENCE ★ OVERALL 06
Legacy of Kain: Deference is a fitting new chapter. Huge, bloody and pretty. Get ready to spill some blood.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING OVERALL 05
Violent ballet with a shortage of modes and options. There are much better recreations of Pro Wrestling.

LE MANS 24 HOURS ★ OVERALL 06
Accountable for gamers daunted by sim-style vehicle handling, but has depth and thrills.



LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING ★ OVERALL 09

Meaty button-mashing for the masses. Movie-to-game licenses are almost never this good. And it's a two-player game.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

MACE GRIFFIN BOUNTY HUNTER ★ OVERALL 08

A hype-free, classy intermesh of different styles makes for one of the most compelling games of the year.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MADDEN NFL 2004 ★ OVERALL 09

Not just for those who already love padding-up, this is a great game, whatever your tastes.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

MAFIA OVERALL 07

Mafia is a slick title that could have been a classic: it's the driving sections weren't so dull. Close but no cigar.

MANHUNT ★ OVERALL 08

Manhunt is a solid, enjoyable stealth-'em-up with utterly engaging gameplay. Not one for the kiddies, however.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE OVERALL 07

Horrendously long loading times and jerkiness spoil some of the best shootouts gaming has to offer.

MAXIMO VS ARMY OF ZIN ★ OVERALL 08

Much more accessible than its prequel, with an even more engaging plot.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN ★ OVERALL 09

A game? A movie? MOH is a grueling experience that packs the best of both worlds.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

METAL GEAR SOLID: GUTTEN IN THE SYSTEM ★ OVERALL 08

If you love blowing stuff up then this will do more than whet your appetite for destruction.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY ★ OVERALL 10

A must-own, state-of-the-art tactical espionage game that's reason enough to buy a PS2. A superbly packed, gripping story.

GOLD
PlayStation 2

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE ★ OVERALL 08

Incredibly comprehensive Metal Gear package for rembies but MGS2 owners will struggle to find \$110's worth.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MICROMACHINES ★ OVERALL 08

Nothing particularly next-gen in this instalment of the series, but an excellent racing diversion nonetheless.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MIDWAY'S ARCADE TREASURES ★ OVERALL 08

Beer Rapper alone is worth the \$40. Trust us, when the Bear touches your lips it tastes so good! A must-own collection.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE - OPERATION SURMA ★ OVERALL 08

Captures the stealthy suit perfectly but ignores the other MI staples - car chases and hot chicks!

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MOTO GP OVERALL 07

Gran Turismo on two wheels? A fantastic motorbike sim that rewards repeated play.

MOTO GP2 OVERALL 07

A refreshing bike racer. Slightly repetitive gameplay and a shallow multiplayer, but slick, fast and realistic. Excellent 3D graphics and race replay facility.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MOTO GP3 OVERALL 07

A little repetitive and far too similar to the last two games. Still, it's the best motorbike game on the system thus far.

MUSIC 2000 ★ OVERALL 09

A mighty authoritative music title, which works as a fun diversion or a serious tool. Unmissable for wannabe bedroom artists.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

NX SUPERFURY 2003: FEAT RICKY CARMICHAEL OVERALL 07

Pushed and engaging motocross sim that utilises its subject matter to great effect. An excellent extreme game.

NX RIDER OVERALL 06

Motocross/supercross sim that lacks the true grittiness and excitement of the sport.

NBA 2K3 ★ OVERALL 08

Not only realistic, but packed with plenty of features as well, offering a wide selection of game modes.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NBA LIVE 2004 ★ OVERALL 08

Nonsensical better than 2003, but how much more can EA cram into their sports games?

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NBA STREET VOLUME 2 ★ OVERALL 09

A must-own for hoop fans and anyone looking for a solid multiplayer title.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

PSONE PLAYA

Psone games that are still worth the time of day



DRIVER

Stuntman's good and Driv3r is on the way, but for now at least. Reflection's original is still the daddy of mission-based driving games. The cool-as-bulldoz storytelling certainly helps, but the game's real draw lies in the faultless way the car handles, enabling you to perform the kind of grandstanding manoeuvres permanent grins are made of with style and ease. The graphics have dated faster than a Duran Duran song but if you squint you can still see a lot of charm there. And when it comes to simulating the mother of all car chases, this is the only disc you need spinning in your PlayStation 2. So what are you waiting for? Go and grab this pronto. What else are you going to do with that ten bucks in your pocket? Throw another ten bucks down on the counter and you can probably get Driver 2 as well.

NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2 ★ OVERALL 08

A must-own for hoop fans and anyone looking for a solid multiplayer title.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND ★ OVERALL 09

Sony's NAI tick goes here: a grained rat up a drain pipe, ground shaking stereo, no previous owners. It's a steal.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

NFL 2K3 ★ OVERALL 09

This is the game to own for anyone into American football thanks to its ultra-realistic graphics and gameplay.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

NFL STREET ★ OVERALL 08

Forget street cricket, NFL Street is so fun that I'll have kids playing it on the streets, yelling "go long".

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NHL 2K3 ★ OVERALL 08

Excellent simulation settings for the die-hard fans, and plenty of arcade thrills for the rest of us.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NHL 2004 ★ OVERALL 08

PS2's finest NHL romp. You'll enjoy this even if you think Wayne Gretzky is some kind of Polish Soup.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NY RACE OVERALL 08

Average future taxi racer, based on the opening sequence of Luc Besson's sci-fi epic The Fifth Element. Nothing crazy to see here.

ONI OVERALL 07

New character animation in an enjoyable 3rd person sci-fi romp.

ONIMUSHA: WARRIORS ★ OVERALL 08

Impressive survival horror that lets the PlayStation 2 run riot. Does suffer from an iffy PAL conversion, though.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

OPERATION WINBACK OVERALL 06

Lacks variety, but still an enjoyable stealth shooter nevertheless.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

ORPHEN OVERALL 04

A disappointing anime-inspired Japanese RPG.

PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2 OVERALL 07

Rhythm action game from Japan in which you play a rapping dog. Simple but compelling gameplay. Short life span and only really worth revisiting for nostalgia.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

PARIS-DAKAR RALLY OVERALL 05

Based on the race of the same name, this sim does little to inspire interest.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

PENNY RACERS OVERALL 04

A half-baked and underfed GT3, with just a few good tracks, it's a difficult one to recommend to anybody wanting a great racer.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

POLICE 24/7 OVERALL 05

Basic cop-shot light gun game with motion capture option. Frantic and fast but lacks structure and individuality. Just another on-rails shoot-'em-up.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

PRIDE FC ★ OVERALL 09

The new king of the ring! Pride FC is the most realistic fighting simulation available on any system to date. Great stuff.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME ★ OVERALL 09

Prince! More like the King. Ubi Soft has crafted one of the greatest PS2 adventure titles yet.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

PRISONER OF WAR OVERALL 07

Escaping from POW camps is all well and good, but you remain a prisoner of often rigid game objectives. Even so, this is a bold, compelling adventure game.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 ★ OVERALL 09

If you know who Kewell is you must own this. The best soccer, sports and multiplayer game on your PS2.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

PROJECT EDEN ★ OVERALL 08

Look beyond some not-great visuals and you'll lose weeks to this complex and satisfying first-person shooter/adventure.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

QUAKE III ★ OVERALL 09

In four-player, this FPS is solid multiplayer fun. A technical tour de force, it runs smoothly and looks absolutely gorgeous.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

RATCHET & CLANK ★ OVERALL 09

Pure platforming bliss from the company behind the original Spyro the Dragon titles on the PSone.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

RATCHET & CLANK 2: LOCKED AND LOADED ★ OVERALL 09

Everything you could want in a sequel. It plays brilliantly and though it lacks innovation it's still a real charmer.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC OVERALL 07

Rayman offers plenty of 'amless fun but he's no match for Ratchets or Rocoons.

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2 OVERALL 07

A marvelous, arcade-based comedy boxing game, pitting ridiculous cartoon fighters against each other.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

RED FACTION ★ OVERALL 08

Ace first-person shooter that melds MGS-style tactics and the all-out blasting of the hallowed Quake II.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X ★ OVERALL 09

A captivating story, cinematic atmosphere, kinetic action, lights, thrills and copious amounts of blood-letting.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN ★ OVERALL 08

Only the high standards of the FPS competition prevent this from being a truly essential buy.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

REZ ★ OVERALL 09

Exploring the relationship between sound and colour this techno shooter provides pure gameplay. Unique, and refreshing.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

RIDGE RACER V OVERALL 07

A popular racer, but high hopes were scuppered by the limited size and a lack of originality.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

RING OF RED ★ OVERALL 08

A mech RTS that's fun! On yes. A must-buy for the discerning robo-fetishist after something different.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY OVERALL 07

A cel-shaded shooter that brings the classic anime to life, but is held back by a decidedly clunky control system.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

ROCKY ★ OVERALL 08

The best boxing title available for PS2. Has a great story mode that takes the player through the movies.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

RUGBY 2004 OVERALL 07

Covers the entirety of the sport well but fails to capture the true feel of it.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

RUGBY LEAGUE ★ OVERALL 08

An entertaining game which neglected NRL fans can finally enjoy. Long-awaited, but very satisfying!

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

RUN LIKE HELL OVERALL 07

A refreshing sci-fi survival horror title with a host of famous names handling the voice acting.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

RYGAR: THE LEGENDARY ADVENTURE OVERALL 07

This would make a fine and worthy addition to any action fan's game collection. Brevity is the only pain.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

SALT LAKE 2002 OVERALL 03

Souless Winter Olympics game. Decent weather effects but the majority of events are rather tedious.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

SHADOW OF MEMORIES ★ OVERALL 08

Filmic adventure that keeps the surprises coming with a serpentine plot.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

SHINOBI ★ OVERALL 08

Shinobi is the kind of frantic, shallow, old school arcade game we don't see enough of anymore. A fast and bloody good time.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

SILENT HILL 2 ★ OVERALL 09

One of the most atmospheric and genuinely frightening titles on PS2. Like all of your worst nightmares rolled in to one game.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

SILENT HILL 3 ★ OVERALL 09

The nastiest game on PlayStation 2 - we dare you to play it!

SILVER
PlayStation 2

SILENT SCOPE 2 OVERALL 07

A worthwhile update of this arcade sniper sim, though the formula is looking tired now.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

SILPHEED: THE LOST PLANET OVERALL 03

Leidous top-down shooter. No-one bought a PS2 for games like this.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

SIR ALEX FERGUSON'S PLAYER MANAGER 2002 OVERALL 06

Adopt footy management sim, but lacks the killer goal.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

SKY ODYSSEY ★ OVERALL 08

A light sim where you don't have to shoot anything, just complete crazy missions.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2



SLED STORM OVERALL 06
A mixed-out, splashy remake of the PSone racing classic, very much in the SSX mould.

SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT OVERALL 07
Deep & splashy this game suffers from disproportionate leaps in difficulty that can be off-putting.

SMUGGLER'S RUN 2: HOSTILE TERRITORIES OVERALL 07
Impressively big, fast and frantic, but not much different to its predecessor.

SOCOM & US NAVY SEALS OVERALL 06
Finally! This is it! The crime game we've all been waiting for!

SONIC HEROES OVERALL 07
Sonic heroes is a solid platformer that pays homage to its classic roots but the of hedgehog has failed to evolve...

SOUL CALIBUR 2 OVERALL 50
Finely crafted gameplay, stunning visuals and a high level of polish make SCII an essential purchase.

SPIDER-MAN OVERALL 07
It doesn't display huge innovations over its PSone counterpart, although it's a solid and enjoyable Spidey title either way.

SPINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY OVERALL 07
If you're sick of characters crapping on and on in cut-scenes then this will be right up your alley.

SSX 3 OVERALL 09
Delivers an avalanche of adrenalin rushing action, unlike any other snowboarding title out there.

STARSKY & HUTCH OVERALL 07
Given the lack of gameplay variety this cop caper shouldn't be as consistently enjoyable as it is.

STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER OVERALL 07
Gorgeous to look at, taking the gamer into the Star Wars universe, but is let down by repetitive gameplay.

STAR WARS: CLONE WARS OVERALL 07
One for the Star Wars collectors, and a great battlefield in its own right. Shallow but still worth investigation.

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER OVERALL 09
Misnomer: 3D Star Wars blaster with engaging missions and film-perfect sound effects. Great fun.

STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBARD RACING OVERALL 05
Banal cartoon kart racer. The Force is weak with this one.

STATE OF EMERGENCY OVERALL 06
A shallow but worryingly enjoyable game that puts the player at the centre of a riot.

STREET FIGHTER EX3 OVERALL 06
A decent enough 2D/3D fighting game, but is miking the series to death. There are better 2D fighters from the same company.

STREET HOOPS OVERALL 06
More about collecting fancy duds than having a decent game of basketball, which is why this hoops title misses from the line.

STUNTMAN OVERALL 06
Won't have the wide appeal of the Driven games due to its difficulty, but it's an ingenious concept that thrills and entertains.

SUMMER HEAT BEACH VOLLEYBALL OVERALL 07
The best beach at beach volleyball we've seen, but nothing to really set your gaming soul on fire.

SUMMONER 2 OVERALL 08
Follow-up to the RPG launch title. More action orientated than the original, but still an epic adventure for fans of fantasy.

SUPERSTAR STREET CHALLENGE OVERALL 04
A by-the-book arcade racing game round desolate cities. Nothing to recommend it.

SHOARD OF THE SAMURAI OVERALL 07
Sword of the Samurai is a slow, ponderous, but intelligent game that combines strategy with gore.

TARZAN FREERIDE OVERALL 04
Based on a Disney film of the same name, this tries to be different with 'surfing' tree branches, but it doesn't work.

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT OVERALL 06
Fantastically playable and graphically spectacular beat-'em-up. The tagging moves make it a worthwhile purchase.

TEKKEN 4 OVERALL 09
Continuing the tradition of fighting game excellence. The first Tekken game to include free-movement.

TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN OVERALL 06
An infusion of ninja style and killer gameplay across nine sumptuous levels. A great return to form for a classic title.

TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES OVERALL 06
Like Armie, this game is a likeable dinosaur. Big guns and explosions but last-generation gameplay.

THE GETAWAY OVERALL 09
Sony's answer to Grand Theft Auto, with a decidedly darker and nastier storyline. Offers an amazingly life-like replica of London.

THE HOBBIT OVERALL 07
The Hobbit is a game devoid of challenge and originality, and strictly for the younger Tolkien fans.

THE HULK OVERALL 07
Not a smash-hit, but not damaged goods either. An enjoyable beat 'em up, shame about those stealth sections though.

THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN OVERALL 08
Combine the show's best elements with the best of GTA and you've got an instant, charming winner.

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE OVERALL 06
It's Copsy Taxi but with Bart and Homer behind the wheel.

THE SIMS: BUSTNY OUT OVERALL 08
Bustny! Out is slicker than the last game but without enough gameplay enhancements to make it essential.

THE FINCH OVERALL 04
Not only does it do justice to the classic horror film, but also introduces fear and trust issues to the survival-horror genre.

THE WEAKEST LINK OVERALL 04
You'll get more enjoyment playing along with the show than you will from putting up with the viper-tongued host.

THEME PARK WORLD OVERALL 07
Take on the role of a theme park tycoon for a day in this engaging god sim, where pleasing the crowds and getting those tumstiles-a-spinning is your prime directive.

THIS IS FOOTBALL 2003 OVERALL 07
Has an excellent one-two passing system and is a solid football title, but it still plays in the shadow of Pro Evolution 2 and FIFA 2003.

THUNDERHAWK: OPERATION PHOENIX OVERALL 07
A brave attempt to blend arcade and sim with choppers.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004 OVERALL 06
The best golf game on PS2, but we're holding our breath for next year's online version.

TIME CRISIS 3 OVERALL 06
Action-packed arcade bullet-fest with plenty of lure for the casual player. Very similar to Time Crisis 2 though.

TIMESPLITTERS 2 OVERALL 10
Takes the multiplayer from TimeSplitters and adds heaps of options. Major visual upgrades. A link for 16-player games - the works!

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM OVERALL 06
As a budget-priced tactical shooter, Jungle Storm is an absolute bargain. Spend the money on free gear.

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3 OVERALL 07
It falls short of being brilliant, it only it had gone that extra mile. Fingers crossed for next time.

TOM CLANCY'S SPLITTER CELL OVERALL 10
Move over Snake, Sam's the new special agent in town! Splitter Cell is an innovative game with some very cool touches.

TOM RABBIT: THE ANGEL OF BADNESS OVERALL 06
A little on the slow side but there's no doubting Lara's appeal. The original antagonist is back!

TOM HAWK'S UNDERGROUND OVERALL 09
Neversoft has turned the Hawk series into a Vice City-style adventure. And they've lost none of the charm doing it.

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA OVERALL 06
A solid shooter that takes GTA's ideas and improves many of them, but loses something along the way.

TURBO EVOLUTION OVERALL 06
Boasts a wicked line-up of weapons and a variety of gaming styles, but suffers from crazy AI and frame rate issues.

TWIN CALIBER OVERALL 03
One of the shoddiest shooters around. Takes an interesting twin-pistol gaming concept and ruins it with slow game play, chronic control issues.

TWISTED METAL: BLACK OVERALL 06
This is everything that you'd expect a Twisted Metal game to be on PS2 - and then some.

UNLIMITED SAGA OVERALL 07
If you've never played a Sogo game, this will be unfamiliar and unspectacular but very challenging.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT OVERALL 08
Totally over-the-top first-person shooter. Makes for a nice alternative to Quake III, but is outclassed totally by TimeSplitters 2.

URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER OVERALL 07
UFS is not worth pulling your shirt over your head but given a chance it's worth a run.

V-RALLY 3 OVERALL 08
Not as instantly playable as WRC II Extreme or Colin McRae Rally 3 but effort pays off with some very satirical racing.

VA SUPERCAR RACE DRIVER OVERALL 06
Real damage. Real V8s. Real Aussie tracks. Real fun. The best racing game seen so far on the PlayStation 2.

VICTORIOUS BOXERS OVERALL 04
Offbeat Japanese boxing title that lacks the killer punch. Pointless to track down while games such as Rocky are about.

VAMPIRE NIGHT OVERALL 06
A vampire-biasing light gun extravaganza that looks great but has questionable replay value once the bad boys are all put to rest.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION OVERALL 08
Packed with things to do, VF4 still lacks the outright fun that makes Soul Calibur a game for everyone.

VIRTUA TENNIS 2 OVERALL 06
Far and away the best Tennis simulation to grace the PS2. The World Circuit mode provides an awesome long term challenge.

WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED OVERALL 04
It may be a little wet behind the ears but Unleashed has just as many thrills as its extreme brothers.

WAR OF THE MONSTERS OVERALL 07
War of the Monsters is a big trash game that explodes with charm and bums brightly, but not for very long.

WARHAMMER 40,000: FIRE WARRIOR OVERALL 07
A decent FPS with good controls and an interesting story but it doesn't bring anything new to the tabletop.

WHIPASH OVERALL 07
A great sense of humour and warped characters save Whipash from obscurity as a platformer.

WIPEDOUT FUSION OVERALL 09
Style and substance are here in the most fully realised Wipeout yet. This future racer is as smart and extreme as it rets.

WORMS 3D OVERALL 07
Drooling worms fanatics - you know who you are - will grab this in a flash but anyone who drinks their tequila without the little wriggly wags will want to wait for Worms 3D.

WRC 3 OVERALL 09
An improvement over its esteemed predecessor, WRC 3 races neck and neck with McRae 4 for rally glory.

WWE SMACKDOWN! HERE COMES THE PAIN! OVERALL 08
The best there is, the best there was, and the best there ever shall be... until the next SmackDown!

X3 OVERALL 09
X3 takes the really old FPS and adds fresh style to make it a very worthy purchase.

X-MEN 2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE OVERALL 06
A quality action adventure that blends stealth with hand-to-hand combat. Only a few limitations deny it a higher score.

TOP 5 RACING GAMES

1. GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC
2. BURNOUT 2

Sony's masterpiece is still the racer that every other is compared against!

Cars don't get much faster than this, and they certainly don't crash any more explosively.

3. NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND

Faster and more furious than 2 Fast, 2 Furious? You better believe it.

4. COLIN MCRAE RALLY 4

The dirtiest racer on PlayStation 2! The graphics shine and the tracks will test any driver.

5. SSX 3

Just because it has no wheels, doesn't mean SSX 3 isn't one of the fastest games out there.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

IT'S TIME TO LOCK AND LOAD AGAIN 'COS GABE LOGAN IS BACK! *SYPHON FILTER*'S DEBUT ON THE PS2 WILL BE COVERED FIRST IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE OF *OPS2*!

NEXT MONTH
IN OFFICIAL
PLAYSTATION 2
MAGAZINE

SYPHON FILTER: OMEGA STRAIN

We get Australia's first ever hands-on of the next big online monster! *Omega Strain* is the latest in the *Syphon Filter* series. Find out why everyone's raving!

LIGHTS! CAMERA!

And ACTION! *OPS2* uncovers all the latest games to be based on movies for the coming year! There's some no-brainers but a few surprises as well!

PROJECT ZERO 2

After playing the unfinished version, it's going to take someone game to get through this horrific experience... any volunteers?

8 NEW PLAYABLE PS2 DEMOS!

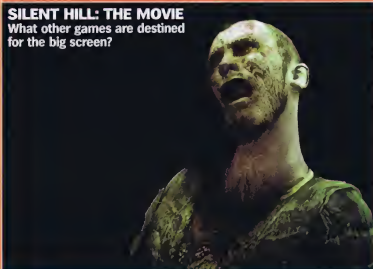


Australia's only playable demo DVD. Next month our disc will be packed with the latest playable demos including *Final Fantasy X-2*, *SOCOM II*, *R: Racing*, *Forbidden Siren*, *Broken Sword 3*, *TIS 2004*, *Firefighter F.D. 18* and more! No other magazine packs so much value onto one demo disc!

SYPHON FILTER
Appearing on the PS2 for the first time ever!



SILENT HILL: THE MOVIE
What other games are destined for the big screen?



PROJECT ZERO 2
The game that's scaring the pants off *Resident Evil*



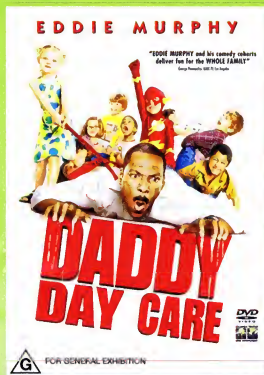
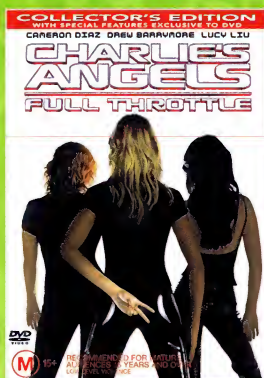
FINAL FANTASY X-2: We've got the only playable demo of this RPG monster!



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PlayStation®2



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